Books of advice for princes in fifteenth century England with particular reference to the period 1450-1485

Thesis

BOOKS OF ADVICE FOR PRINCES IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PERIOD 1450-1485

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ABSTRACT

The Introduction addresses the difficulty of providing a precise definition of the genre of books of advice to princes. Particular books have been selected because they were owned by or produced for an English prince during the period extending from the early fifteenth century to 1485. The first four chapters are devoted to a consideration of authoritative works which were translated from Latin or French and to treatises which were specially composed for a prince. The anonymous Tractatus de Regimine Principum, Ashby's Active Policy of a Prince and the Fastolf/Worcester production, the Boke of Noblesse are largely original works. Their contents are subjected to a more extended analysis and the view of good princely government they contain is discussed. Chapter 5 starts with an account of the political writings of Sir John Fortescue, particular attention is paid to the De Laudibus Legum Anglie and the Governance of England as it is claimed that they belong to the genre of books of advice. An attempt is then made from a close examination of the internal evidence to assign a date to the Governance and extend understanding of the circumstances of its composition. The final chapter reviews contemporary documents for indications that the ideas and assumptions of the rulers and their followers were influenced by the precepts contained in books of advice. It is suggested that princely regard for these works can be demonstrated and that their impact must be seen in the wider context of the ethical values to which contemporary society subscribed. There

are, however, indications in some popular manifestos, parliamentary petitions and the works of Fortescue of a growing unease at placing undue reliance on the personal qualities of a prince. The need to establish constitutional devices which would negate the weakness of a particular king was increasingly recognised.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

After the breakdown of the reconciliation between the followers of Henry VI and the Yorkist lords in 1459, the latter formed a confederacy:

> "...ilz conclurrent de guerroier ceulz qui gouvernoient le roy et pour ce faire au plus tost quilz peurent escripvirent et manderent a tous ceulz qui estoient de leur partie et alyez a eulz que a ung jour nomme feussent prestz, et que cestoit pour le bien du roy et de la chose publicque dAngleterre."[1]

Other instances could be drawn from the years of the civil wars of one faction condemning "those who guided the king" and seeking to overthrow them "for the good of the king and for the public interest".

The question immediately arises of how some of the leaders of an intensely traditionalist and hierarchical society could contemplate such a radical challenge to royal authority during the decade before the issue became primarily dynastic. Ten years later

1. Jean de Waurin, Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne, a present nomme Engleterre, ed. W. Hardy and E.L.P.C. Hardy, Rolls Series (London, 1891), vol. V, p.273. "They decided to make war against those who guided the king and to achieve this as quickly as possible, they wrote and sent word to all those who belonged to their faction asking them to come to them promptly on a named day. This should be done for the good of the king and for the public interest of England."

Edward IV temporarily lost power to groups of magnates and their followings not once but twice and his brother was displaced by another such combination in 1485. The complex circumstances which led to such a high level of volatility even in a ruling class which had, since the days of king John, frequently been critical of or hostile to its leading member, have preoccupied many historians. The purpose of this thesis is to establish that a literary genre existed which postulated a basic set of principles of sound government. What these principles were, how they came to be current in literate society in the later part of the fifteenth century and what impact they may have had on the conduct of affairs is the subject of the study.

The main part of the thesis is devoted to identifying the background, contents and importance of the books of advice or 'mirrors for princes' which were available to the Lancastrian and Yorkist kings and their families, 1450 to 1485. The final chapter seeks to assess how far the ideas and assumptions concerning what constituted good princely rule were to be found in the actual language of government. For this purpose a wide selection of historical documents: manifestos, chronicles, proclamations, letters, warrants parliamentary records etc. are surveyed in contrast to the mainly literary material considered in the earlier chapters. Two rather different methodologies will thus be required: for chapters I to 4 and the first part of chapter 5 techniques similar to some of those used by editors of literary texts will be employed to discuss the origins and sources of particular books. The second part of chapter 5 and chapter 6 use historical methods to determine the status and significance of the

treatises and documents. In a study which, to be reasonably comprehensive, must deal with some twenty different texts, as well as alternate versions and ancillary material, coverage will necessarily be uneven and, in some cases, rely in part on authoritative editors. Since relatively little work has been devoted to the original poem by George Ashby and to the Boke of Noblesse, more consideration has been given to those treatises. Above all, the work of Sir John Fortescue, although much referred to, has never been examined at length to determine how far it forms part of the corpus of books of advice for princes. It is hoped that this study will make some contribution to the development of knowledge of that aspect of his thought.

A major problem which arises in undertaking the study of the corpus of books of advice is one of definition. Genet has probably made the most constructive modern contribution to the field in his Introduction to four English political tracts:

> "...it has usually been assumed that there was a particular type of political literature, concerned above all with the prince and his image, which could be regarded as the most typical product of the Middle Ages in this field; this is what German scholars have called the 'Fürstenspiegel' genre, from the titles ('Speculum Regis' in Latin, 'Miroir au Prince' in French) of many works belonging to the genre."[1]

1. J.P. Genet, Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages (London, 1977), for the Royal Historical Society, Camden 4th Series, vol.18, p.ix.

He goes on to recognise that there is very little which many books assigned to this category actually have in common: moral principles and rules of action may be offered by all such works; yet the compendious and highly polished prose of a scholastic can throw little light on the popular, brief verses of a layman or minor cleric. Genet proceeds to attempt a thorough and precise definition of the genre:

> "It is upon these four pillars of vulgarisation, pedagogic bias, an overwhelming preoccupation with ethics, and Aristotelian theory, that this new literature of the 'Miroirs' is to be built."[1]

This description is useful and, as subsequent chapters should show, a fair account of development of the genre in France in the later middle ages. He then, however, has to admit that in English literature the situation was not so clear and that there were many works which were undoubtedly influenced by "Miroirs" but which did not really fit his description.

A very pragmatic approach to the definition of a corpus of books of advice in late fifteenth century England is proposed for the present purpose. The main interest here is to investigate the works that were known to princes or which contemporaries wished them to know. Provided that their main intention was to advise the reader concerning the best policies, virtues and conduct that should be cultivated in order to govern well, other attributes of

1. Genet, op.cit., p.xiv.

the work may be discounted. By these criteria books not specifically destined for princes such as the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers and the Body of Polycye are 'in' while romances whose prime purpose was presumably to entertain rather than instruct such as the Cyropédie and the Knight's Tale are 'out'. Very specialised pieces of advice which do not engage fairly generally with personal morality and politics, for example the many versions of the Physiognomy, are also excluded. The king who failed to practise good rule, variously defined by those works in terms of the Cardinal virtues of Justice, Temperance, Prudence and Fortitude, could expect the fate threatened by the poet Gower in terms reminiscent of the Dies Irae:

> "Tanta licet pronus pro tempore det tibi thronus;
> Sit nisi sine bonus, non honor est set onus.
> Rex igitur videat cum curru quomodo vadat,
> Et sibi provideat, ne rota versa cadat."[1]

1. The Complete Works of John Gower, ed J.C. Macaulay (Oxford 1899-1902) vol. 4, p.364. "An easy throne may give you so much for a time; without good conduct it is a burden rather than an honour. The king should therefore ensure how he keeps pace with the chariot and that he does not fall under the turning wheel."

Chapter I: English Translations of Traditional Books of Advice to Princes

This chapter will concentrate on the books of advice to princes and associated literature belonging to the traditional genre which were translated into English during the later Lancastrian and the Yorkist periods. A number of books discussed in subsequent chapters contain material from this corpus of well established works. The point which it is hoped will emerge in the present chapter is that, despite the relevance of treatises which were produced in the late middle ages in response to actual political circumstances, the majority of those who chose to commission or purchase such literature opted for earlier works, which had been taken from either the scholastic translations from Greek and Arabic or from those who offered written advice to French kings in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.[1] Most of these books were in Latin or French but the number of English translations is impressive: nine versions of the Secretum Secretorum, five of the Liber Philosophorum Moralium Antiquorum, three of Renatus Flavius Vegetius's De Re Militari and two of Egidio Colonna's De Regimine Principum were produced in England during the fifteenth century.

(i) The Secretum Secretorum

The great labours of R.R. Steel at the end of the last century, recently

1. See Appendix I.

reinforced by an edition of unpublished versions by M. Manzalaoui,[1] have established the importance of the Secretum Secretorum in England during the later middle ages. No less than nine independent English translations of Latin or French versions were produced in the course of the fifteenth century. The two which belong to the early decades will not be considered.[2] The popular and influential verse translation by Lydgate and Burgh called by Steele the Secrees of the Old Philisoffres will be discussed in chapter 2 together with other manifestations of the Chaucerian tradition.[3] Even before these books were produced literate society had been introduced to many of the ideas in the Secretum via the works of Chaucer and Gower which showed their influence.[4] The problems of assessing the significance of the fifteenth century English translations of the Secretum are considerable. Firstly, little information can be gathered from most of the texts concerning the date, the reasons for and the circumstances of their production. They tend to adhere so closely to their French and Latin originals that there is little to be said about them that can throw light on the political and philosophical interests of those who brought

1. Secretum Secretorum, Opera Hactenus inedita Roger Baconi, Fasc.V, Oxford, 1920. Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum, E.E.T.S. Extra Series, vol. 74, 1898 both edited by R.R. Steele.

   'Secretum Secretorum', Nine English Versions, ed. M. Manzalaoui, vol.I, Texts, E.E.T.S., 276 (London, 1977). Vol.II which will contain extended commentaries on the texts published in vol.I is not expected to appear within the next few years (1.3.82) but it will probably cover much the same ground as the material in his thesis. References will be made to the E.E.T.S. edition as 'Manz. op.cit.' and to the thesis as Manz. op.cit., (thesis).

2. One anonymous translation dates from very early in the fifteenth century, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 490. In 1422 James Young dedicated his version to James Butler, earl of Ormond, Lord Deputy of Ireland. Both are printed by Steele, Three Prose Versions of the 'Secreta Secretorum', op.cit., pp.40-118 and 119-248.

3. See below pp. 97-103.

4. Manz. (thesis), chaps. 8, 14.

about their translation. Finally, discussion of the Secretum tends to become confused by reason of the many different versions of the Hispalensis and Tripolitanus texts that were circulating in Europe and of the elements that were present or absent in a particular text. This aspect of the subject is not strictly relevant to the present theme and has been shunned; the works of Steele and Manzalaoui supply the missing details. Yet, given the importance of the work, these factors provide no justification for avoiding the task of evaluation.[1]

All six of the translations of the Secretum Secretorum now to be described briefly are based on the longer Tripolitanus text rather than the earlier, shorter Hispalensis version and all save the first exist in unique manuscripts. Bodleian MS Ashmole 396, ff.1-47, is dated by Manzalaoui to the years 1444-5. He points out that the later fifteenth century manuscript, Bodleian MS Lyell 36, ff.85-127, is a copy, although some details have been rearranged.[2] This translation is based on a Latin recension of the full Tripolitanus text.[3] In neither Ashmole nor Lyell does the English translator make any attempt to identify himself or to refer to a patron. The former manuscript, which contains twelve other items dealing with medicine, arithmetic and astrology, could conceivably be the original but, if it is not, personal details of the translator may have been abandoned deliberately by the copyist. There are no indications of ownership on the manuscript. Lyell 36, on the other hand, contains a list of fifteenth century names on the inside back cover: "Ihon Wyght(?) Marvyne(?) Mownford/Ihon Peyne Eward Byddyl/Raffe(?) Barton."

1. Translations such as Oxford, Bodley MS Rawl. C 83, which cover only the medical parts of the Secretum have been discounted. So has the Scottish version of Gilbert of the Haye.

2. Manz. op.cit., Introduction, pp.xxvii-xxix.

3. Bodleian MS Rawl. C 274, and British Library, Royal MS 12 E XV.

According to Emden, John Payne and Ralph Barton were respectively chaplain and organist at Magdalen College, Oxford, during periods in the last two decades of the century.[1] Since the manuscript can be dated to approximately that period, it is not too audacious to assume that it was commissioned for the use of the college. If this was the case, it indicates that one copy at least of the English prose Secretum was known to other people than the original recipient of the translation. This in turn shows that the problem of dissemination observed by Manzalaoui[2] was receiving some amelioration by the close of the century, even without the help of the printing press. The translator adhered so closely to his text that little trace of originality may be discerned, although in his thesis Manzalaoui did express the belief that the anonymous scholar showed some special interest in astronomy and warfare in the way in which he arranged the material. The general impression given by this version, however, is that it was a commercial venture, probably produced by a man who lived by his pen and who knew that there was a ready market for an English translation of a well-known and highly esteemed text.

The other English translation of the full Tripolitanus text exists in a unique manuscript which in 1977 was owned by Mr R.B. Honeyman Jr of Rancho los Cerritos, San Juan Capistrano, California. The Privyte of Privyteis, as this version is entitled, occupies ff.4-109 of the volume; ff.109v-122 contain an alchemical text written in the same hand. The first item is prefaced by a dedication to the translator's patron and, although the first leaf is missing,

1. A. de la Mare, Catalogue of the Collection of Manuscripts Bequeathed to the Bodleian Library Oxford by James P.R. Lyell (Oxford, 1971), pp.92-101.

2. See below, p.30.

the remainder furnishes useful information:

> "...a meruulus wytt, that bothe he was a nobyl werryur of Knightly prowes alle the dayis of this present lyfe, eke a nobyl phylysophyr in alle prowydens and moral vertuys, bothe of practyk and eloqurens, hos name men clepyd Sir Milis Stapylton, the qwyche lyuyd in dayis of Henry the Syxte, Kynge of Englond. The qwyche notabyl knyght, for vertu, and to profyte hem that schuld come aftyr hym, dyd me to translate thys boke owte of Latyne in to Englysch."[1]

The name of the translator is divulged on f.35 at the end of book I:

> "Here endyth the fyrst boke of the Privyte of Privyteis. Parisiensis. Explicit primus liber de Secretis secretorum, secundum translacionem Johannis de Caritate."[2]

Further evidence of provenance is provided by the name 'John Harcourt' which appears in the margin of f.61 and several times on the end papers. Manzalaoui promises to discuss the probable connections between these pieces of evidence in his eagerly awaited commentary in volume II. It is likely, however, from what he says in the Introduction to volume I,[3] that his view has not changed substantially since he outlined a possible explanation of the evidence in

1. Manz. op.cit., p.114. Sir Miles Stapleton appears in R.A. Griffiths, The Reign of Henry VI, (London, 1981), pp.426, 590, 606, 689. He was an M.P. and one of those charged with the keeping of the seas by the government in 1442. He seems to have been heavily engaged in both local and national politics, annoying the Pastons by the part he played in the former, they characterised him as "that knavish knight". J.C. Wedgwood, History of Parliament: biographies of members of the Commons House, 1439-1509, HMSO, (1936), pp.804-5.

2. Manz. op.cit., p.142.

3. Ibid., Introduction, pp.xxxi-xxxii.

Appendix A to his thesis in 1954.[1] 'Johannis de Caritate' is almost certainly a Latin version of an English or French name, e.g. Charity, de Charite, Love or Loveday. The significance of 'Parisiensis' on f.35 may well be that the particular copy of the manuscript that has survived was written for a relation of Sir Miles Stapleton, who had died in 1466, for he was clearly dead by the time that the dedication of the Honeyman manuscript was produced in Paris. Manzalaoui suggests that as some of the members of the Harcourt family, who were connected to Sir Miles Stapleton by marriage, were supporters of Henry Tudor, later Henry VII, the John Harcourt who wrote his name several times on the pages may well have commissioned it while in exile in Paris awaiting the downfall of Richard III.[2] He assumes that, if it were written in exile in Paris circa 1484, Caritate must have been responsible. Given that there could have been a lapse of over thirty years since the translation was made, there seems to be no reason why this should have been the case. One of the Harcourts, who presumably held the original translation at the time, may simply have asked a scribe to make a copy which included the dedication by Caritate. The dedication could have been written at any time between 1466, the date of the death of Sir Miles, and whenever this particular manuscript was produced.

There is another aspect of this matter, dealt with rather dismissively by Manzalaoui,[3] which repays further consideration. Sir Miles Stapleton was the

1. Manz. op.cit., (thesis), vol.I, pp.711-720.

2. Sir Miles Stapleton's widow, Catherine, married Sir Richard Harcourt in 1467-8. He remained in England, however, throughout the reign of Richard III and required a pardon on the accession of Henry VII. Wedgwood, op.cit., pp.419-20. It is not possible to identify the John Harcourt who wrote his name in the Honeyman MS but it is probable that he was a relative of Sir Richard.

3. Manz. op.cit. (thesis), vol.I, p.296: "A confrontation of the character of Metham as it emerges from these very slight pieces of evidence, with that of Caritatis, shows no sign of any common characteristic, but, on the other hand, nothing to prove for certain that the clownish young poet and naturalist of the 1440s could not later have mellowed into being the patient expositor of ethical wisdom and medical lore that Caritatis was to be a quarter of a century later."

recipient of several works written at his request by John Metham, "a sympyl scoler of philosophye" and "scolere off Cambryg".[1] In the first place, John Metham's work supplies some welcome information about this version of the Secretum Secretorum. In Amoryus and Cleopes, a sub-Lydgatian version of the Pyramus and Thisbe story told in execrable rhyme royal, he wrote:

> "Wysdam ever settyng in yche werke be-ffore,
> As Salomon in sapyens makyth remembrauns;
> Prudens Hys frend and systyr he namyd evermore,
> With hos counsel he so demenyd hys governauns,
> That iche wyse creature hym louyd with hertely affyauns;
> Ever as a wurthy werryur in every necessyte,
> Hym qwyt for hys kynge, bothe on lond and see;
> As at Waxham,[2] qwere Gyldenerrys londyd to brenne the cuntre,
> Thys excellent knyght bare hym as a champyon.
> And the hole matere, that lyste to rede and see,
> Rede the story that I endyght off kyng Cassyon,
> And in the ende ye mat yt fynde, affter the destruccion
> Of Corbellyon, qwere I alle hys notabyl dedys bryng to remenbrauns,[3]
> Done wurthyly off hym in Englond and and Frauns.
> And ye that this story can noght fynde,

1. The Works of John Metham, Including the Romance of 'Amoryus and Cleopes', ed. from the unique manuscript in the Garrett Collection in the Library of Princeton University by Hardin Craig, E.E.T.S., Original Series, 132 (London, 1916), Introduction, p.xi.

2. Margaret Paston mentioned an attack on Waxham by the Flemings in a letter probably written after 1440. Hardin Craig, note p.163.

3. This work seems not to have survived.

Seke them in the begynnyng off Alexander Macedo,
Or in Josue, or Josepus;[1] for in thise storyis I
brynge to mende
The knyght, Mylys Stapylton, and hys lady bothe to ii,
Now here I spare yow that yt be so."[2]

These verses link Sir Miles Stapleton, and, therefore, the inception of the Caritate Secretum, firmly with the robust, belligerent gentry of Norfolk many of whom, like Sir John Fastolf, had seen good service in the French wars. There is no way of knowing the reception Sir Miles gave to Amoryus and Cleopes but, if he and his wife found it congenial, it is to be feared that good literature was not really appreciated in their household. Yet the very fact that he had commissioned so many works from Metham shows him to have had some pretensions to learning. Indeed the studies of Moore have found that Sir Miles was a member of an inter-related group of nobles, clerics and gentry who showed a lively interest in literature. They all lived in or were connected with East Anglia and included the duke of Suffolk, Lord Scales, Osbern Bokenham and John Lydgate as well as Sir John Fastolf, his household and Paston relatives.[3]

The pieces contained in the Garrett manuscript may well all have been produced at an early stage in Metham's career. He wrote at the beginning of his translation of a treatise on palmistry that it was done in his twenty fifth

1. These works seem not to have survived.

2. Hardin Craig, pp.78-79.

3. S. Moore, 'Patrons of Letters in Norfolk and Suffolk, c.1450', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, I, vol.27, 1912, pp.188-207, II, vol.28, 1913, pp.79-105.

year,[1] and the general tone of his work is one of youthful insouciance and carelessness. One treatise specifically mentioned as being produced at the request of Sir Miles Stapleton[2] was the Physiognomy, a translation by Metham which was based on Polemon and the Secretum. If, as is possible, Metham was later the translator of the Honeyman version of the Secretum which bears the name 'Caritate', there was no conflict of subject matter. The Caritate version is notable for the brevity with which the Physiognomy section is treated. Sir Miles certainly requested both books, so he must have felt that they complemented each other and, since the Secretum was probably produced after the Physiognomy, this would explain the attenuation of that section in the former work. There is also a small piece of internal evidence to link the works. In his preface to the Physiognomy, Metham referred to the Secretum as the 'Pryvyte off Phylosophrys.' This is an unusual title; other fifteenth century English authors called it either the 'Secretum Secretorum' or the "book of the governance of kings and princes". The Caritate version, however, repeated this idiosyncratic title in part as the 'Prvyte of Privyteis'. The style and approach of the works is not dissimilar: at the beginning of the Physiognomy Metham wrote:

> "...yt ys noght, as me semyth, expedyent here, for dysputyng to grounde this boke nedeth noght: syn thise autourrys confferme this, that ys to sey, the grete clerke Arystotyl, and Bysa, and Trevere, and many odyr."[3]

1. Hardin Craig, op.cit.;, pp.84-5. A later copy of this translation exists in Oxford, All Souls MS 81, ff.202-212r.

2. Ibid., p.120.

3. Ibid, p.120.

Caritate inserted a similar kind of discussion of his sources before he started on the main text:

> "... and odyr sundry oppnyownnys of Aristotyl, the qwyche nomdyr longyth to the matyr of thys boke ner soundyth to trwth, qwerfor at the substauns of thys mater I begynne be ordyr, be the help of owr Lord Iesu to procede."[1]

Certainly the Secretum Secretorum is a work of greater maturity but, assuming that it was completed sometime between the 1440s and the death of Sir Miles Stapleton in 1466, it is suggested that it would be reasonable to suppose that John Metham's scholarship had developed and improved; he may have attached a retrospective tribute to his patron to the translation. The author of the Honeyman manuscript shared the same Christian name of 'John'. The identity of the translator of this version of the Secretum must remain an open question. The name 'Caritate' could represent a professional pseudonym that Metham adopted in the course of his career, it could be a joke understood only by his own small circle of readers or could simply indicate that the book was translated by some one else.

Whatever the identity of Sir Miles Stapleton's translator, he showed more originality than most of the mid fifteenth century scholars who Englished the Secretum. His description of himself as the 'Expositor' cast him in the role of a man of science explaining an arcane text to less learned contemporaries.[2] He showed a robust independence in dealing with passages that he considered to be excessively superstitious, on occasions he even excised them.

1. Manzalaoui, op.cit., p.115.
2. Ibid, p.121, "Digressio expositoris".

He was also anxious that the medical advice should have a practical and properly scientific application for his readers. In several passages the translator deliberately substituted appropriate English remedies for the exotic or unknown substances advocated in his original, for example:

> "And use the tast of sqwete herbys qwyllis thu art in the bath in eviry tyme as is conuenyent, as, in wyntir, worme-wode and fedyrfoye, and tansey and sothyrnwode, and in somyr, rosis and violeettis, and sqwyche that refresch be the mene of colde."[1]

Caritate probably had a specialised interest in pharmacology; not only did passages on medicine receive close attention but his reorganisation of the structure differed from his Latin original in such a way that two out of his four books were exclusively devoted to medical matters. Manzalaoui also sees signs that the English translator could have inserted some statements in support of the cause of Henry of Richmond.[2] In particular he thinks the emphasis on the necessity that a king should rule his subjects righteously coheres with the contention of the followers of Henry that a just cause could confer legitimacy on a claimant. The subjects of a bad king will:

> "prey God for hys deth that her gode may be restoryd, for in sqwyche gotyn gode the kynge is nevir trwe eyr."[3]

The suggestion is surely open to serious doubt as the sense of the dedication is

1. Manz. op.cit., p.156.
2. Manz. op.cit. (thesis) pp.288-290.
3. Manz. op.cit., p.126.

plainly that the translation was made in the days of Sir Miles Stapleton, in 1466 or earlier. Unless the text was altered subsequently, work carried out at such a time could not have anticipated events that were to occur twenty or more years in the future. The sentiments expressed are, in any case, quite usual in works of princely instruction.[1] Even without original political additions, the translation of Caritate is refreshing. The structure of the original has not been rigidly adhered to and the personal remarks of the writer and the knowledge we have of his patron provide welcome information about the circumstances of the production of this English version of the Secretum.

No such details are forthcoming about three of the four English translations from shortened French versions of Tripolitanus which were produced during the mid and later fifteenth century. Two of these are interesting, however, because of their connection with the gentleman scribe and bibliophile, John Shirley. Several manuscripts written or owned by him survive and it has been possible for scholars such as A.A. Brusendorff, E.P. Hammond and A.I. Doyle to recontruct something of his life and work. It seems highly probable that he was the ancient buried at St Bartholomew the Less, London, in 1456 at approximately ninety years of age. Since the contents of the manuscripts associated with him can all be dated to the middle years of the century, with a concentration around the year 1440, and since his will seems to have been proved in the spring of 1457, there is independent evidence to corroborate this identification.[2] His career is best encapsulated in the words

1. E.g. Ashmole Version, Manz. op.cit., p.33.

2. A.I. Doyle, 'More Light on John Shirley', Medium Aevum, vol.xxx, no.2, 1961, pp.93-101.

of Stow who wrote in his Survey:

> "This gentleman, a great traveller in divers countries, amongest other his labours, painefully collected the workes of Geffrey Chaucer, Iohn Lidgate, and other learned writers, which workes hee wrote in sundry volumes to remayne for posterity. I have seene them, and partly do possesse them."[1]

Hammond lists seven volumes which were either wholly or partially written by Shirley and five more which are connected with him either because some of the material has been copied from his books or because they contain references to him or signs of his ownership.[2] MS Ashmole 59 contains in ff.1-12 a copy by Shirley of an anonymous translation of the Secretum, namely chapters 1-15. He has made two curious errors: the title is given as the 'Decretum Aristotelis', obviously a misreading for 'Secretum' and, instead of referring to 'John', son of Patrick, he calls him 'Marmaduke'. Apart from these aberrations and some very minor deviations, the translator adhered closely to his text throughout the fragment. The date of the central portion of the manuscript must be after 1449 as both Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (d.1447) and John Lydgate (d.circa 1449), many of whose works are contained in the volume, were referred to as dead. But these folios (13-100) could have been written later and been bound with the Decretum subsequently, and Manzalaoui is inclined to assign it to a few years

1. Quoted in English Verse Between Chaucer and Surrey, ed. E.P. Hammond (Durham, N. Carolina, 1927), pp.193-4.

2. Ibid., p.192.

earlier.[1] He also assumes that it must predate Shirley's own translation of the Secretum, as it is so fragmentary and unsatisfactory that he would hardly have bothered to copy it if he already possessed his own version.

Another English version of the shortened Tripolitanus French text was translated by Shirley himself. Both a copy of the translation, although not in his hand, and the manuscript he probably based it on, bearing his name several times, survive.[2] The former also contains Shirley's translation of Le Livre de bonnes meurs carried out in 1440 and the Cronycle of the Dethe of James Stewarde. The Secretum which he calls The Governance of Kynges and of Prynces commences on folio 211 and breaks off abruptly during chapter xvi on folio 224v. In the table of contents which precedes the text he listed the chapters up to number 58, but it is impossible to judge whether this represented a pious intention or the original scope of the work. It is interesting that the anonymous translation and Shirley's own translation should break off at approximately the same point. There may, however, be little significance in this fact since, although both versions emanate from the same Latin original and cover the same ground, they diverge quite substantially in their subject matter from chapter iv. Supposing that Shirley had the anonymous translation in his possession before embarking on his own version, it can have been of little assistance to him.

The Governance of Kings and Princes was dedicated to Henry VI in the

1. Manz., op.cit. (thesis), p.307. In his E.E.T.S. edition of the text, p.203, he describes it as belonging to "around 1448".

2. British Library MS Additional 5467 and Cambridge University Library MS Ff I 33, pp.1-62.

following words:

> "And first the prologe of the doctour that translated this same story oute of Grece in Frensh. And out of Frensh into oure moders tonge by youre humble suget and seruyture Johan Shirley in the last/dayes of his grete age, so as his ignorant feblesse wolde souffise, which recommendeth and submitteth to the noblesse and the supportacion of youre excellent discression to correct, adde and amonuse, there as youre fauourable gentylesse best liketh."[1]

The prayer for the king which precedes the main text is based very closely on the French but, instead of translating "nostre roy" literally, he carefully substituted "oure souerain lord Kyng of England and of Fraunce".[2] Another indication that this translation was produced specifically for the king is contained in chapter 14. The French text advised that the prince should honour the clergy and take their advice. Shirley extended this considerably:

> "...it behoveth and longeth to thy roiall excellence that thow honnoure the clargie and bere reverence to the well lernyng men occupied vertuousli in scoles, in studies and in universitees, and of clene and deuoute religious, to help and enhance hem the wise, the well willed men and counsailers and officiars of thy parlamentes, makyng their questions and demaundes,

1. Manz., op.cit., p.229.

2. Ibid., pp.252-3.

> with the redy remedies and absolucions, pro republica
> to the honoure, worship and profete of thyn estate
> roiall and of thyne umbill true subgettes."[1]

Here Shirley seems to pander deliberately to the king's predilections for the patronage of learning and encouragement of a pure and pious clergy but also to hint that he should take good advice from his parliaments and council for the benefit of all. The Governance was probably written before May 1450 since, when Shirley mentions rebels, there is no reference to Jack Cade.[2] It cannot, however, have been produced very much before that date and this loyal servant of the dynasty, despite his great age, must have been well aware of the growing unrest in the country at Henry's prodigality at home and his failure resolutely to defend England's territories in France.

Manzalaoui sees Shirley as a precursor of William Caxton and of the humanists of the next century in the assiduity with which he assembled and translated works of learning:

> "...Shirley's insertions in his Secretum Secretorum
> can all be classed as examples of a form of cultural
> patriotism, which sought to praise his own country
> and, at the same time, trace its position in the
> traditions that go back to ancient times."[3]

1. Manz., op.cit., pp.306-309.

2. Ibid. On p.227, at the beginning of the text, he dates it to "about 1450".

3. Manz., op.cit. (thesis), p.329.

The most spectacular of several examples of this tendency occurs in chapter viii where he left his French text standing to embark on an encomium of England through an enumeration of the richness of her resources, completed by a couple of lines from Lydgate:

> "Lord God, preserve under thy myghty honde
> Oure Kynge, oure Qwene, theire pepull, and this lande."[1]

This patriotic approach may be compared with similar passages in the Libelle of Englysh Polycye which appeared a few years earlier and the later Commodyties of England sometimes attributed to Sir John Fortescue. It enables us to identify the attitude and motives of John Shirley more precisely than is possible with most of the other translators of the Secretum.

There is little to be said of the two remaining English prose versions of French treatises based on the abbreviated Tripolitanus texts. Both are anonymous and both adhere very closely to their originals. Oxford Bodleian MS University 85, pp.70-136, shares the same volume with the iii Consideracions and Alain Chartier's Quadrilogue Invectif. The questions which arise, the appearance and date of the manuscript and its possible provenance are described below in the context of the English versions of the De Regimine Principum. As the scribe Ricardus Franciscus was responsible for its execution, it must have been produced during his active years in the mid fifteenth century. It is quite possible that whoever translated the Secretum was also responsible for the other works in the volume. In all cases the style is comparatively graceful and the sense of the French original is accurately conveyed.

1. Manz., op.cit., p.291.

Finally, a translation of the Secretum is to be found in British Library, Royal MS 18 A VII, folios 1-26v.[1] This volume is dated by Warner and Gilson[2] to the mid fifteenth century, Steele assigns it to about 1460[3] and Manzalaoui believes that the style and language indicate a date in the third quarter of the century.[4] The Secretum, which is called "The book of the governaunce of kyngis and of pryncis callid the Secrete of Secretes...", is followed by a similar kind of text, an English translation of an epistle supposedly sent to king Raymond by St Bernard advising him how to govern himself and organise his household. The epistle was well known; French and Latin copies were current in fifteenth century England.[5] The only indication of contemporary provenance is an inscription on the fly leaf, folio 30, believed by Warner and Gilson to date from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century: "memorandum: Stoke ii mylles owte of Newarke (East Stoke, co. Notts) at the lordchepe Jenet Haynynge and Edward Haynynge."[6] There is great similarity between the language used in these last two short versions of the Secretum, a sign that from the middle of the century there was an increasing tendency to standardisation, yet the Royal Manuscript compares unfavourably with the Bodley version. If the obscure Haynynges were the original owners of the manuscript, it can hardly be a matter

1. Printed by Steele, Three English Prose Versions of Secreta, op.cit., pp.1-39.

2. G.F Warner and J.P. Gilson, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and Kings' Collections in the British Museum (London, 1921), 4 vols., vol. II, p.265.

3. Steele, Secrees, op.cit., Introduction, p.xiii.

4. Manz., op.cit. (thesis), vol.I, p.351.

5. British Library, Royal MSS 6 E III, no.16 and 17 E IV, art.3.

6. Warner and Gilson, see above, vol.II, p.265.

for surprise that their translator showed less facility in his task than the scholar whose work was copied by the cultivated professional Ricardus Franciscus.

The most significant aspect of the translations of the Secretum in the fifteenth century is the large number which were produced. Two prose versions appeared in the early decades, followed by the popular Lydgate/Burgh verses and four other prose versions in the late 1440s and, possibly, early 1450s. Royal MS 18 A VII appeared in about 1460 and the Caritate version could date from any time between about 1440 and 1466. Manzalaoui neatly encapsulated the problem that this spate of translations indicates:

> "The frequency with which the text was translated during this period is indicative, not so much of the bare fact that it was popular (for transcription of the same translation in a number of manuscripts would demonstrate this) but that it was in demand by patrons, each isolated from the other by the lack of incentive or a system, that would have led, as in later days, to such a form of cultural interchange as would have made the frequent re-translation of the Secretum Secretorum otiose."[1]

This problem was by no means unique to the dissemination of English copies of the Secretum Secretorum.

There can be no reasonable doubt that Henry VI and his family were familiar with the Secretum or possessed personal copies. Lydgate's reference to Henry

1. Manz., op.cit. (thesis), vol.I, p.298.

as the originator of the project to translate it into verse as the Secrees of the Old Philisoffres will be discussed below together with the fact that Benedict Burgh continued the work after his master's death.[1] The link with the king may have loosened, however, by the time he concluded the poem as he finished with the sentiment:

> "Goo litel book/and mekely me excuse,
> To alle thoo that/shal the seen or rede,
> Yf ony man/thy Rudnesse lyst accuse,
> Make no diffence/but with lowlyhede
> Pray hym refourme/wheer as he seth nede:
> To that entent/I do the forth directe,
> Wher thou fayllest/that men shal the correcte."[2]

Any idea that the book should be dedicated to the king seems to have gone. This may well be explained by the superior status of Lydgate, a trusted servant and courtier, who had produced many laudatory and didactic verses for the king during his long career. In contrast, the relatively unimportant Burgh might not aspire to such a patron. The disorderly state of the kingdom and the king's poor mental health during the 1450s are possible additional reasons why no such dedication concluded the poem. We may be assured, however, that Henry was unlikely to have asked Lydgate to put the rather unpromising material of the Secretum into verse if he was not already acquainted with the book and, almost certainly, the owner of a copy in Latin and possibly also in French and/or English.

1. See below, chap.2

2. Steele, Secrees, op.cit., p.86.

John Shirley's prose translation of the Secretum Secretorum which has been described above appeared along with the other two items in British Library Additional 5467, the Cronicle of the Dethe of James Stewarde and the book of Bonnes Moeurs, all dedicated to Henry VI. This is not surprising in itself; a loyal servant of the Lancastrian dynasty such as Shirley could hardly find better employment for his declining years than to produce edifying works for his monarch. The surviving copy does, however, present some problems. On folio 97r, in the prologue to the Bonnes Moeurs, Shirley informs us that he had translated the work in London:

> "...in the last/dayes of his grete age, so as his ignorant feblesse wolde souffise, which recommendeth and submitteth to the noblesse and the supportacion of youre excellent discression to correct, add and amonuse, there as youre fauourable gentylesse best liketh."

Yet the script of that portion of Additional 5467 indicates a date in the third quarter of the century. The volume is unlikely to have been a presentation copy for the king since the poor script and general appearance of the book could not have been prepossessing even before the ravages of damp. None of the capitals left blank for rubricating have been completed and the last item, the Secretum, breaks off abruptly. Yet the sense of the dedications both of the Bonnes Moeurs and the Secretum is clearly that they are to be read by the king. In the latter he was invited to: "...correct, adde and amonuse, there as youre fauourable gentylesse best liketh."[1] Such terms imply that the author expected

1. Manz., op.cit., p.229

his royal master to read his work thoroughly. That expectation would not be unrealistic of a serious minded king, dedicated to the furtherance of education. The most likely explanation of Additional 5467 would seem to be that it was copied from an earlier book or books. It is possible that Shirley dictated the last item, the Secretum, as a new translation, although the same scribe seems to have finished the preceding piece, the Bonnes Moeurs, and simply continued with the Secretum on the same page. The volume has been bound at least once since the fifteenth century so there is no way of knowing from the gatherings whether the translation was ever finished either in the original manuscript or in Additional 5467. The existence of a full table of chapters tips the balance of probability in favour of Shirley having completed the work. His translations were presumably presented to Henry VI in a suitably opulent volume or collection of volumes; the surviving copy was made, probably from the original draft of the translation, for the use of Shirley and his shop. Its unfinished state may simply result from the ravages of time or could be the consequence of his death in 1456. The volume was probably made for him as Hammond noticed that it retains his headings and tricks of spelling.[1] It is unlikely, in any case, to have been produced after 1460, as the assumption was made that Henry was the reigning monarch.

Although Henry VI and his queen scarcely can have had the time or opportunity to read many books during their wanderings in the early 1460s, Margaret at least, with her son, Edward of Lancaster, enjoyed a fairly stable if impoverished existence in France between 1463 and 1471. Their little circle included Sir John Fortescue who was to make the education of his prince a prime concern[2] and Edward's chancellor, Dr John Morton; the royal instruction almost

1. Hammond, op.cit., p.191.

2. See below, chap. 5.

certainly included either readings from the text of the Secretum or lengthy quotations from memory.[1]

The Yorkist dynasty too was at least provided with one copy of the Secretum Secretorum in Latin, although they did not seem to provoke an urge in contemporary scholars to produce English translations. British Library, Royal MS 12 E XV comprises a collection of largely anonymous medical and astrological works and an idiosyncratic version of the Secretum. It is unique by reason of the way in which it draws part of its material from Roger Bacon's glossed version. Unusually it is divided into six books: book ii is almost exclusively devoted to astronomical and astrological material from Bacon's introduction to the Secretum and book vi is mostly drawn from the second book of the ad Almansorem of Rasis. From time to time commentaries from Bacon and other sources are placed beside the text.[2] None of these aberrations, however, can reflect the wishes of the Yorkists as the volume dates from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The script and presentation of the first works must have looked plain and old fashioned, even in the mid fifteenth century. It was, however, a bargain, for at folio 19 a new fourteenth century scribe took over. The remaining pages were systematically ruled to leave about three fifths of the page for the script and a generous margin, boxed in with double ruled lines, to hold the commentary. The script is clear, regular and highly legible, the capitals are rubricated in red, blue and gold and ornamented with calligraphic scrolls so exuberant that they sometimes contain little faces wearing vivid expressions which seem to react to the contents of the page. At some point,

1. For the reading matter available at St Mihiel see The Governance of England, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1885), Introduction, pp.96-100, and De Laudibus Legum Anglie, ed. S.B. Chrimes (Cambridge, 1942), Introduction, pp.lxxxix-xcv.

2. Warner and Gilson, op.cit., vol.II, pp.54-55.

almost certainly in the 1450s when he was of an age to appreciate it, someone acquired this volume for Edward, earl of March. Folio 2v bears an inscription which may be an autograph: "Iste liber constat Edwardo comiti Marchie primo genitus filius (sic) ducis Eboraci."[1] The hand is firm and cultivated but not that of a professional scribe. The writer made an error in his first attempt to spell 'Eboraci' and was obliged to score it out. The fly leaves bear fifteenth century accounts which must predate the acquisition of the book by Edward, if the binding is original. It figured in the Westminster catalogue of 1542 and had probably been in the Royal Library since 1461. Edward's brothers and children would have had access to it, but there must be a strong presumption that most of the princes would have possessed their own copies of such a revered book. The fact that the king's original version was bound with a number of works of science might imply that he regarded it primarily as a useful repository of practical information rather than as an ethical guide to government.[2]

The case for the general currency of the Secretum Secretorum amongst clergy and literate laymen in England in the late middle ages scarcely needs to be made. Manzalaoui in chapter 8 of his thesis enumerated a selection of works which showed its influence including fourteenth and fifteenth century songs, political poems and sermons as well as renowned authors and translators such as Chaucer, Gower, Hoccleve, Lydgate and Caxton.[3] The comparatively early emergence of the Secretum ensured that parts of it were found embedded both in later Arabic works,

1. "This book belongs permanently with Edward, earl of March, the first born son of the duke of York."

2. In this it may be compared to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 581 which was compiled for Richard II. It contained two items based on the Secretum as well as scientific and prophetic works.

3. See also R. Tuve, Seasons and Months, Studies in a Tradition of Middle English Poetry (Paris, 1933), pp.46-70.

such as the original of the Dicta Philosophorum, and various Christian compendia and encyclopaedias. Apart from such indirect influences, a significant proportion of people also owned Latin copies. Fifty seven manuscripts have been identified which currently survive in English libraries which were probably or certainly produced in England between 1300 and 1500, as well as six French translations.[1] Also the papers of John Blacman, the priest and companion of Henry VI, which date from circa 1463, contain a list of twenty four of his books including 'Aristotiles de regimine principum', which almost certainly refers to the Secretum.[2]

(ii) The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers

The Liber Philosophorum Moralium Antiquorum appeared in the Arab world in the ninth century. It was partly based on the Secretum Secretorum for it contained identifiable portions of the earlier work, yet its different structure and purpose justify a separate consideration of its significance. It is singular that no less than four English versions[3] of the French translation of Guillaume de Tignonville should appear in England as late as the second half of the

1. See Appendix 1.

2. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. MS 154 flyleaf and fols 1r - 2v.

3. C.F. Buhler, The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers, the translations made by Stephen Scrope, William Worcester, Rivers and an Anonymous Translator (London, 1941), E.E.T.S., Original Series, 211, Introduction. All references in this section which simply mention 'Buhler' refer to this work. The count of four versions does not include the shortened Scrope translation given by Buhler, pp.297-230. Ashby's version of the Liber was taken straight from the Latin and is so closely related to "the Active Policy of a Prince" which precedes it in the unique manuscript Cambridge University Library that it is discussed with it in chapter 2.

fifteenth century, although the works of Franceschini[1] and Buhler[2] have shown that the Liber Philosophorum was used liberally as a source book during previous centuries by some of the most popular of the schoolmen, e.g. Vincent of Beauvais and Walter Burley. Presumably, whilst it remained in Latin, it was inaccessible to the kind of secular writers who eventually chose to translate it. Only when de Tignonville produced his Dits Moraulx in or before 1402 were Stephen Scrope, the anonymous author of the Helmingham manuscript, William Worcester and Lord Rivers able to do their work.[3]

The inclusion of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers in the list of books of instruction for princes needs some justification. Unlike the Secretum (intended originally for Alexander the Great), the De Regimine (produced for the dauphin, later king Philip IV), the Game and Play of Chess (for Evilmerodach), the Epistle of Othea (for Hector), or the contemporary treatises which are discussed in later chapters, no prince, real or imaginary, is cited as the intended recipient. Three factors will justify its consideration: firstly, it is strongly in the medieval scholastic tradition of encyclopaedic, didactic literature of which one type was the book of instruction for princes. Few of the books mentioned above were ever intended to be read exclusively by the hypothetical target of the advice. In some cases this would have been impossible since the prince concerned was either dead at the time when the book was written or had never existed in the first place. Secondly, the work is almost entirely

1. E. Franceschini, 'Il Liber philosophorum moralium antiquorum', Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1931-2, vol.XCI, parte seconda, pp.393-597.

2. C.F. Buhler, 'Greek Philosophers in the Literature of the Later Middle Ages', Speculum, vol.XII, 1937, pp.440-455.

3. The Latin original will be referred to as the Liber, the French as the Dits and the English versions either as the Dicts or by the name of their author.

composed from a princely/aristocratic point of view and many of the sayings are reports of advice given to kings and the anecdotes recount princely exploits wise and foolish. Thirdly, by the use they made of it, medieval scholars clearly regarded the Dicts as part of the literature in which it was suitable to instruct princes and aristocrats. This attitude persisted in fifteenth century England; Stephen Scrope translated it for his powerful step-father Sir John Fastolf, George Ashby intended his version for Edward, the Lancastrian Prince of Wales, and Lord Rivers produced his specifically for the edification of Edward, the Yorkist Prince of Wales, and he tells us why. The Dicts:

> "...speketh also universally to thexample, weel and doctryne of alle kynges prynces and to people of every estate. It lawdes vertu and science. It blames vices and ignorance."[1]

All five English versions of the Dicts were produced within a span of twenty seven years. The earliest dated translation was made by Stephen Scrope who provided the information in his colophon:

> "...now late translatid out of Frensche tung(e) in-to Englisch tunge the yere of Crist m'ccccl to John Fostalfe, knyght, for his contemplacion and solace bi Stephen Scrope, esquyer, son in law un-to the said Fostalf."[2]

1 The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers, Facsimile Reproduction by W. Blades (London, 1877), f.1v.

2. Buhler, p.2.

Five manuscripts survive of the full work. Warner gives an account of the relationship between Scrope and his step-father in the Introduction[1] to his edition of Scrope's translation of The Epistle of Othea to Hector which he also made for Sir John Fastolf.[2] Despite his gentle status and considerable inheritance, Scrope was horribly treated by Fastolf who, until his death in 1459, unjustly kept him out of his property. It is very probable that Fastolf acquired French manuscripts of both the Dits Moraulx and and L'Epitre d'Othea during the long years of his distinguished and personally profitable service in France. It could be assumed, given the position Scrope seems to have held in his household, that the knight would have taken the initiative in requesting both translations, especially as they would equip him with the kind of wisdom he would need as a member of the king's council. Scrope's dedication of Othea was ambivalent; he told the old knight how profitable it would be for him to read of the Cardinal Virtues described in the book, but he also admitted that he has undertaken the work "be the suffraunce off yowre noble and good ffadyrhode and by yowre commaundement".[3] As the short colophon of the Dicts yields no real indication of whether Scrope or Fastolf was the moving force behind the translation the question must remain open. What is clear, however, is that Fastolf and his circle were, by contemporary secular standards, well-read and receptive to new works, especially those which might have some practical application to their lives.

Opinions of Scrope's ability as a translator differ amongst the various editors of his work. Warner, in his introduction to the Othea in 1904, damned

1. Christine de Pisan, The Epistle of Othea to Hector, or the Boke of Knyghthode, ed. G.P. Warner (Roxburghe Club, London, 1904). See also G. Poulett Scrope, History of the Manor and Ancient Barony of Castle Combe in the County of Wilts, privately printed,(1852).

2. See below, chap. 3.

3. Warner, op.cit., p.2.

with faint praise:

> "There is no reason to suppose that the translator had received the training of a scholar; on the contrary the probability is that, owing to a sickly youth and other drawbacks, his education had been more or less neglected. It is not even certain that he had been regularly taught French ... possibly ... he learnt all he knew of the language while he was with his stepfather in France. Be that as it may, his rendering of Christine de Pisan's French may claim on the whole to be fairly well done. The verse of his 'textes' is too much of the doggerel type and his meaning is sometimes obscure, but as a rule he follows the original closely, while the orthography of the manuscript, though atrociously bad, is no worse than what we are accustomed to in the Paston Letters and elsewhere in the same period."[1]

Buhler, veteran of editions of both the Dicts and Othea, is much more favourably disposed: in 1970, in his Introduction to the latter, he wrote:

> "Our translator can lay claim to be regarded as a writer of some distinction in the mid-fifteenth century, a period not particularly luminous in the annals of British literary history."[2]

1. Warner, op.cit., Introduction, pp.xxxix-xl.

2. The Epistle of Othea of Christine de Pisan, ed. C.F. Buhler, E.E.T.S., no.264, 1970, p.xii.

The evidence indicates that Buhler was over charitable. Apart from the inevitable inaccuracies and mistranslations, Scrope's passages, in comparison with the anonymous Helmingham manuscript and Rivers, constantly produce infelicities of style, feeble or confusing phrases to convey the original idea and even the use of French words necessitated, presumably, by his inability to convey their meaning in English:

> "bien faire est une chose dirivee: Et toutes foys
> est il aucunement gref a y venir: Mais on va
> legerement a mal faire Car traire loing du
> bersault est moult legiere chose a faire &
> moult difficile a y ferir."[1]

Scrope:

> "wele dede is a divine thyng, & yit in som
> wise it is grevous to come to; bot men gothe
> lyghtly to eville dede, for it is a fulle
> light thinge to drawe ferre du bersault id est
> from, &/hit is full desceivable to smyte it."[2]

Rivers:

> "wele doing is a laudable thing neverthelesse it
> is somwhat harde to do but lightly one may do evil
> as an archier to faile of the butte is no wonder,

1. G. de Tignonville, La Forest et description des grands et sages philosophes (Paris, 1529), f.lxxxv.

2. Buhler, p.172.

but to hytte the prike is a greet maistre."[1]

Schofield[2] also considered Rivers to be a superior translator to Scrope:

> "being a freer rendering, it (Rivers' translation) is a little easier, a little more polished, a little more flowing than that of his English predecessor."

Scrope's value as an original writer is hard to assess. He may have had a hand in the Boke of Noblesse,[3] usually attributed to William Worcester, which is a respectable piece of fairly original prose. Warner found the style of his dedication of Othea "so involved that in places it is hardly intelligible".[4] This verdict is hard to accept, however, as Fastolf's hapless dependant seems simply to have done the job expected of him in the manner that contemporary literary convention dictated. In one respect at least he may pass the most stringent test as a scholar with distinction. He showed great fidelity to his text throughout the Dicts. Both his editors remarked on this and, comparing his version with a manuscript of Tignonville, this was found to be the case in the passages checked. This fidelity may variously have been occasioned by a lack of originality, a high standard of scholarship or a fear of offending Fastolf, who may have demanded a literal rendering of the admired original text.

1. Blades, op.cit., f.45r.
2. M.E. Scofield, The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers, A Middle English Version by Stephen Scrope, Dissertation for Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1936), p.33.
3. Ed. J. Gough Nichols (Roxburgh Club, London, 1860), see below, chap.4.
4. Warner, op.cit., Introduction, p.xxxiii.

Another prose translation of the Dicts was produced, according to Buhler,[1] in or near the decade 1450-60. This opinion is based on the handwriting which is that of a professional scribe of the third quarter of the fifteenth century. This anonymous version is preserved in a unique manuscript in the possession of Lord Tollemache at Helmingham Hall. At least one other manuscript of this translation probably originally existed as the text has been confused in several places in such a way as to imply that some of the pages of the book from which it was copied were ordered wrongly. It begins and ends without any additions to the text of Tignonville. Like Scrope the translator adhered very closely to the French version throughout and, on the whole, committed fewer errors and stylistic infelicities.[2] Little can be made of this version of the Dicts for the present purpose, but its very existence is a proof of the great interest which was felt in this work.

According to the colophon in the manuscript in the University Library, Cambridge,[3] William Worcester made some additions to Scrope's original text in March 1472.[4] Worcester was a member of Fastolf's household for many years and the literary executor of Scrope who died in 1472, and the additions are fairly minor in character. It is consequently questionable whether this should be considered as a separate work in its own right. None of the additions can be traced back to the French version, so they must be assumed to be Worcester's own. It does, in any case, give further evidence that a number of distinguished men of

1. Buhler, Introduction, pp.xxxviii-xxxix. I have not examined the original of Buhler's text. Its close adherence to Tignonville and the absence of features which might provide a provenance made an attempt to do so redundant.

2. Ibid., p.xlvii.

3. Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg.I.34.2.

4. Or 1473 see Buhler, Introduction, p.xli, n.1.

letters regarded the Dicts as a valuable authority.

Lord Rivers's translation of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers has long enjoyed the reputation of being the first dated book to be printed in England. Caxton brought out an edition which was dated 1477 in the Epilogue and further editions were printed in 1479/80 and 1489/90. An additional colophon, which appears in one copy of the first edition and in the second edition, gave the exact date of the completion of the first edition as November 18 1477.[1] A manuscript version, dated December 24 1477, exists in Lambeth Palace Library.[2] This was the presentation copy, well timed for Christmas, as is shown by the miniature on folio 1: Edward is portrayed enthroned with his queen with the prince of Wales standing by him. Lord Rivers and a tonsured figure kneel before them to present the volume; the latter is almost certainly the scribe, William Haywarde. The text is based on Caxton's first edition and included both the preface of Rivers and the famous epilogue by Caxton with its ribald allusions to Socrates's strictures on women.

Apart from the controversy over the order of editions two and three, the production of an elaborate manuscript only five weeks after the appearance of the first edition has always been perplexing. Lotte Hellinga's monograph has

1. These are the dates given by W.J.B. Crotch, The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton, E.E.T.S., Original Series, no.176 (London, 1928), pp.18-31. Buhler in two articles, 'The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers', The Library, 4th Series, vol.xv, 1934, pp.316-26, and 'More About the Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers', vol.xxi, 1940, pp.284-90, questioned the traditional order assigned to the second and third editions. He suggested that they should be reversed making the assumption that the third edition took the re-issue of edition one with its colophon giving the exact date as its model. Buhler's theories were rejected by G. Legman, 'A Word on Caxton's Dictes, The Library, 5th Series, vol.iii, 1948, pp.155-85, who rehearsed the arguments for the original order and gave additional reasons for his views.

2. London, Lambeth MS 265.

thrown considerable light on the matter.[1] She takes the meaning of the 1477 colophon to be that the copy of the book which contained it was produced on that day:

> "...sette in forme and emprynted in thys manere as ye maye here in thys booke see Whiche was fynisshed the xviii day of the moneth of Novembre and the seventeth yere of the regne of Kyng Edward the fourth."[2]

She substantiates the claim by typographical evidence that the copy bearing the colophon[3] shows signs that the relevant page was printed in three pulls; the one which impressed the colophon was the last. This discovery considerably eased the hypothetical task of the hapless Haywarde. Instead of being required to copy Lambeth 265 in five weeks and provide for its rubrication and illumination, he may have had months in which to complete the job. The first edition of the Dicts could have been reprinted at any time during 1477. This solution to the problem was, in fact, implicit in Crotch's introduction to his edition of Caxton's prologues and epilogues, although he did not spell it out as clearly as Hellinga:

> "...there appeared a second edition in or about 1479 and a third edition some ten years later still, but there also appear variant forms of the first edition which point

1. L. Hellinga, Caxton in Focus (British Library, London, 1982), pp.77-80.
2. Crotch, op.cit., p.31.
3. Manchester, John Rylands Library.

> to a re-issue during the year 1477. This re-issue is distinguished only by the addition of a colophon, which gives a brief statement of the book's authorship and the date of the impression."[1]

Rivers's treatment of his text was not as respectful as that of Scrope or the author of the Helmingham manuscript. His version is considerably shorter than the others. In addition to odd sentences which are omitted, Plato's sayings are curtailed and whole sections of the Alexander anecdotes are excluded.[2] Scofield was under the impression that, apart from Socrates's views on women upon which Caxton so humorously speculated, Rivers was probably working from an inferior, shortened text.[3] Such versions of Tignonville certainly exist, but Buhler has gone to great lengths in his Introduction to prove that Scrope omitted nothing of any significance from his version and that "Rivers and Scrope made their translations from very similar French manuscripts".[4] Scofield must have over looked what Caxton himself had to say on his lord's treatment of the text:

> "...he willed me to oversee it & shewid me dyverce thinges whiche as him semed myght be left out as diverce lettres missives sent from Alisaunder to darius and aristotle & eche to other. whiche lettres were lityl appertinent unto dictes//and sayenges aforsayd for as

1. Crotch, op.cit., Introduction, p.cvii.
2. Scofield, op.cit., p.33.
3. For example, London, British Library, Additional MS 15305.
4. Buhler, Introduction, p.li.

moche as they specifye of other maters."[1]

This nicely contrasts the magisterial approach of a great lord to the challenge of translation with that of Scrope, probably terrified lest Fastolf should notice any deviation from the original. The greater smoothness and felicity of Rivers's style has been mentioned above and this could be more easily achieved if he did not feel bound to transfer every nuance of feeling from the French.[2]

A book as famous as Caxton's Dicts is almost bound to generate controversy. Apart from the question of which edition came first, Buhler also joined battle on the, for the present purposes, more vital issue of whether Rivers did his work with prior knowledge of any of the previous translations, particularly Scrope's. Blades, who discovered the Scrope version, thought that Rivers knew of it and may have used it.[3] Knust and Franceschini agreed and gave more reasons for thinking so. Buhler devoted much space in his Introduction to showing, by a comparison of the texts and with references to the Helmingham Hall Manuscript and the Latin and French originals, that although they are very close in places there are also considerable variations.[4] Brandl had

1. Crotch, op.cit., p.20. See Appendix 2 for the whole text of Rivers' Preface.

2. R. Hittmair, 'Earl Rivers' Einleitung zu Seiner Übertragung der Weisheitsspruche der Philosophien', Anglia, vols. xlvii/lix, 1935, pp.328-44. This was translated for me by Mrs S. Duncan. Hittmair did not consider Rivers to have shown any originality as a translator. He believed that he and Caxton both followed the principle of scrupulous fidelity to their text, even when a literal reading was incongruous.

3. Buhler, Introduction, p.xlix.

4. Ibid., pp.l-lix.

come to the same conclusion back in 1901.[1] Where Rivers repeated mistakes which occurred in Scrope, they also invariably occurred in Tignonville. No sound reasons have yet been given to doubt the statements of both Rivers and Caxton, in the Preface and Epilogue respectively, that they had never encountered an English translation of the Dits. Rivers, after all, proved himself to be quite capable of translating both the Moral Proverbs of Christine de Pisan and the Cordyale without resorting to plagiarism.

Rivers's translation of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosphers is of great significance to this thesis for the very reason that he gave in his Preface:

> "it lysted the kings grace comaunde me to gyve myn attendaunce uppon my lord the Prince and that I was in his servyse, whan I had leyser I loked upon the sayd booke. And at the last concluded in my self to translate it in to thenglyssh tonge, wiche in my Jugement was not before. Thynkyng also ful necessary to my said lord the understandyng thereof."[2]

Quite independently he had come to the same conclusion as Ashby, that this book which was, as far as he knew, unavailable in English was essential reading for the future king of England. The simple morality would be readily comprehensible to a young boy, the anecdotes would prove attractive and secure his attention. The repetition and lack of structure which might expose the Dicts to censure from

1. A.Brandl, 'On the Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers', An English Miscellany, Presented to Dr Furnivall in Honour of his 75th Birthday (Oxford, 1901), pp.16-22.

2. Blades, op.cit., ff.1v-2r.

twentieth century literary opinion was only one of many instances of the encyclopaedists' style still revered in late fifteenth century England as a precious heritage from the days of early Christianity when St Isidore of Seville established the genre in his Etymylogiae. Indeed, this deliberate attempt to educate the young Edward in a manner appropriate to a prince does not seem to have been isolated.

In the very same year Caxton presented his translation of the Historie of Jason to the Prince of Wales:

> "our tocomyng soverayne lorde whom I praye god save and encrease in vertue & bryng him unto asmoche worship and good Renomme as ever had ony of his noble progenytours To thentent, he may begynne to lerne rede Englissh. not for ony beaute or good Endyting of our englisshe tonge that is therin. but for the novelte of the histories whiche as I suppose hath not be had bifore the translacion herof."[1]

The following year Rivers produced another translation which Caxton duly printed, the Moral Proverbs of Christine de Pisan. The only reference to Rivers is in two verses which form the Epilogue;[2] no space is taken for the motivation of the translation to be discussed. The material is, in many places, close to that used by Tignonville and, although it could not be described as a book of princely instruction, it is closely related both in content and purpose to the

1. Crotch, op.cit., p.34. Hellinga, op.cit., p.98, suggests that it might originally have been dedicated to Margaret, duchess of Burgundy.

2. Ibid., p.32

Dicts and, like them, was probably intended by Rivers for the edification of the young prince. Although Caxton mentioned that Rivers was Governor to the Prince of Wales in the Epilogue to the translation of the Cordyale in 1479, he clearly stated his purpose in carrying out the work was "that bothe the readers and the herers therof sholde knowe them self herafter the better/and amende thair lyvyng",[1] rather than for the personal education of the young Edward.[2] Taken together, however, the two earlier Rivers's translations in conjunction with Caxton's own Jason do look like a deliberate scheme to provide the prince with reading matter appropriate to his station and expected future.[3]

Significantly, neither the Earl or Caxton took the opportunity to add anything of importance to the works they translated. The only alteration Rivers thought fit to make in the Dicts was to shorten it to make it more readable. Caxton boasted in the Prologue to Jason that he was:

> "folowyng myn auctor as nygh as I can or may not chaungyng the sentence. ne//presumyng to adde ne myunusshe ony thing otherwyse than myne auctor hath made in Frensshe."[4]

1. Crotch, op.cit., p.39.

2. D. Borstein, The Middle English Translation of Christine de Pisan's 'Livre du Corps de Policie', ed. from MS Cambridge University Library, Kk I.5 (Heidelberg, 1977), Middle English Texts, 7, pp.31-36, suggests that Rivers may have been the anonymous translator of the Corps.

3. Hellinga, op.cit., pp.89-94, also connected Rivers with Caxton's edition of Malory's Morte Darthur. She believes that in 1485, before the death of Richard III, Caxton was unable to refer specifically to his original patron.

4. Crotch, op.cit., p.33.

The translators wrote original prologues in both the Dicts and Jason but they did not take the opportunity to give any personal ideas on what constituted good princely conduct; they preferred to relate anecdotes and make conventional statements as to the value and wisdom of their texts. A man in Caxton's position, so dependent on the patronage and good will of the Yorkists, might hardly be expected to lecture them on the art of good government. A great lord such as Rivers, the brother of the Queen, was in a unique position to do so. Yet as in other aspects of his life such as his piety and his knightly deeds of arms and courtesy, he was a product of the medieval scholastic and courtly tradition, seemingly untouched by the intellectual and spiritual movements which were beginning to affect Italy and the Low Countries.

The character of the advice offered by the Dicts confirms the impression of Rivers' intellectual disposition. It was an amorphous collection of moral sayings and illustrative anecdotes derived from classical and pseudo-classical sources and overlaid by Christian sentiments from the Bible and the Fathers. Prince Edward would have little chance of learning much of any coherence from such a mélange. The De Regimine Principum would have provided a far more rigorous and systematic guide to good government. Rivers's other choices of works for translation indicate, however, that he had little appreciation of such virtues. Christine de Pisan had produced some substantial didactic works such as the life of Charles V. He shunned these in favour of the slight and undemanding Moral Proverbs.[1] If he was the translator of her Corps de Policie, that was a more serious work with something to say about contemporary politics, but it still did not adopt the painstaking, rational approach of Egidio. His possible

1. See below, chap.3.

part in the choice of the History of Jason and the Morte Darthur, "noble storyes"[1] which might be read before the prince, is probably much more typical of his values and personal tastes. His role in relation to his nephew may be compared with that of Fortescue in relation to Edward of Lancaster. Both were politicians and, by contemporary secular standards, men of learning. It will be claimed below that Fortescue offered the prospective ruler of England a coherent political and economic programme.[2] The best that Rivers could do was to translate specimens of scholastic ethics which had enjoyed common currency in Western Europe for the past two hundred years.

Apart from the thirteen manuscripts of the various English translations of the Dicts, most of which have been mentioned in this chapter, Buhler says that he personally examined five Tignonville manuscripts which are now in English libraries and that he knew of several others in England, including a few which varied from the original French translation.[3] At least four copies of the Latin Liber[4] are also to be found in English libraries. The existence of these versions together with the need felt by several contemporary scholars and Lord Rivers to produce translations provides ample testimony to the popularity of the Dicts in fifteenth century England.

1. Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Society of Antiquaries (London, 1790), p.28.

2. Chapter 6. De Laudibus Legum Anglie, Articles sente by my Lorde princes to therle of Warrewic.

3. One inventory dating from 1466 refers to "a frensh boke of the tales of philosophers". Historical Manuscripts Commission, Eighth Report, part i, p.629a, books delivered to Ewelme Almshouse,Oxford.

4. See Appendix 1.

(iii) The 'De Regimine Principum' by Egidio Colonna.

Only John Trevisa, if he was indeed the translator, had the stamina to English Egidio Colonna's De Regimine Principum in the last years of the fourteenth century.[1] His version was almost certainly known to only a few readers and it must be assumed that no other scholar undertook the task during the next century.[2] This is not, however, a reason for ignoring the work in the present chapter. It will be considered from the following points of view: an analysis of the two tracts which, although by no means faithful translations of the De Regimine are clearly based on it, namely the Tractatus de Regimine Principum and the III Consideracions Right Necesserye to the Good Governaunce of a Prince[3]; the evidence that the De Regimine was known to members of the royal houses of Lancaster and York; and the indications of its popularity with all classes of book owning Englishmen.

The anonymous Latin Tractatus de Regimine Principum which exists in a unique

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 233, ff.1-182.

2. R.P. Green, Poets and Princepleasers, (Toronto, 1980), p.157, states that Shirley translated the De Regimine Principum and that the work is contained in London, British Library, Additional MS 5467 with the Secretum Secretorum and his other two translations. This error probably originated from a rather misleading description of the contents of this manuscript in Green's source, A. Brusendorff, The Chaucer Tradition (London and Copenhagen, 1925), pp.213-15. It is not made clear by the author that when he refers to "the governance of kynges and prynces" he is simply using the title Shirley gave to this version of the Secretum.

3. Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages, ed.J.P.Genet, Royal Historical Society, Camden Society, 4th Series, 18, 1977, pp.40-173 and pp.174-209. Its English title will be used whether the French or English version is being discussed.

manuscript in the British Library[1] was:

> "extractus per quemdam religiosum, ad christianissimum ac imperialissimum regem Anglie, Henricum Sextum."[2]

The book is written in the firm, clear hand of a professional scribe and is richly illuminated: the second half of the volume bears ornaments of scrolls, flowers and geometric patterns on practically every page and is liberally decorated with gold leaf. Folios 136r-180v are written and illuminated in the same style as the earlier parts and their contents are prayers for the various days of the week addressed to the Virgin and to St. John of Bridlington; the Lancastrians had a special devotion to the latter. The high standard of both script and ornament and the royal arms which occur at the beginning of folio 6v increase the probability that it was a presentation copy intended for the king.[3] A note dating from 1757 on folio 3v records that it was originally followed by a portrait of Henry VI; indeed traces of this page with its illuminated border may still be discerned. The author of the tract described himself as an orator who had carried out the work with the help of a bachelor of theology.[4] In mid fifteenth century England 'orator' could mean either chaplain or diplomat. The author covered religion and foreign affairs in what he wrote so he could

1. British Library, Cotton MS Cleopatra A X III, ff. 4r-135v. Printed in Genet, op.cit., pp.40-173.

2. Genet, p.168. "Extracted by a certain member of a religious order for the most christian and most imperial king of England, Henry VI."

3. B. Wolffe, Henry VI (London, 1981), p.14.

4. Genet, op.cit., p.55. See also Green, op.cit., pp.174-6, for a discussion of the various meanings of 'orator' in the late middle ages.

have been either or both. In any case, it is likely that he was attached to the king in some capacity, supported the policy of peace with France associated with Suffolk's following and presented this fine volume to Henry to influence both his spiritual and temporal well being.

Despite some internal evidence as to the date of the volume, it is impossible definitely to assign it to a span of less than fourteen years, i.e.1436-1450. The successful defence of Calais and Roxburgh referred to in the prologue[1] took place in 1436. The work can scarcely have been composed after Jack Cade's revolt in 1450 since Henry was congratulated in the last chapter that:

> "...preclarssime Rex, unanimis consensus communitatis huius regni, absque aliquali insurreccione, vestra tempora stabiliter exornavit, ubi in diebus regum predecessorum vestrorum, quam plurime horribiles insurrecciones istud regum molestius perturbarunt..."[2]

Wolffe[3] took the various references to a queen to mean Margaret of Anjou which would further narrow the dates to 1445, the year of her marriage to Henry, and 1450. Genet, however, believed that the references could be severally to Catherine of Valois, Henry's mother, his wife and to queens in general.[4] I believe that a sentence in part II, chapter I throws the balance of probability

1. Genet, op.cit., p.53.

2. Ibid., p.165. "...most distinguished King, the unanimous agreement of the community of this realm, far from any thought of rebellion, has adorned your reign with stability whereas, during the rule of your predecessors, many horrible insurrections troubled this realm most grievously..."

3. Wolffe, op.cit., p.14.

4. Genet, p.45.

towards Wolffe's theory:

> "Attamen, si assit bonum in prole, quia proles est quoddam bonum commune, quo coniunguntur vir et uxor, racione prolificacionis expedit vobis vestre regine graciosissime inseparabiliter adherere."[1]

The existence of a most gracious queen was assumed but it was still in doubt that Henry would be blessed with children. By the end of the decade, a loyal follower of the king would surely be urging him to cleave closely to his wife to secure offspring, an urgent consideration for a monarch with so few close legitimate relatives. Neither Genet nor Wolffe remarked on another passage which supports the conclusion that the treatise was completed after Henry's marriage:

> "...pro vestre splendidissime regalie ac vestre imperialissime regine perpetua sospitate..."[2]

The style of the tract is excellent - clear, accurate and sufficiently adorned with literary allusions. These are of a kind, however, that show the author and his collaborator to have been traditional scholars who had not felt the influence of the new learning that was infiltrating England from Italy, as did others of their contemporaries.[3] The title gives rise to the expectation

1. Genet, op.cit., p.107. "However, you may be fortunate in having offspring, for children contribute to the common good. For that reason man and wife are joined. For the purpose of expediting procreation you should cleave inseparably to your most gracious queen."

2. Ibid., p.103 . "perpetual fortune for your most splendid family and for your most imperial queen".

3. For example, Whetehamstede, Selling and Free. See R. Weiss, Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century (Oxford, 1957).

that what is on offer is a version of Egidio Colonna's De Regimine Principum or at least an abridgement of his great work. This expectation is compounded by the concluding sentence which describes it as "extracted by a certain member of a religious order".[1] The great length of the original made it a formidable undertaking for a busy layman such as the king of England to read in its entirety, yet, whatever their original intentions may have been, the author and his collaborator have not simply summarised Egidio.[2] This is important because it means that the Tractatus is sufficiently original to be interesting in its own right, particularly as it was produced during the few years preceding the period which is considered in detail in this thesis. The following summary attempts to place it in the tradition of books of intruction and identify where it diverges significantly from Egidio Colonna.

The prologue contained the humility formulae with which it was customary for authors to address their powerful patrons. It also stated that the realm was in danger from external enemies and recommended the power of prayer as a means of confounding them. To this end the treatise was designed to assist Henry to embody all the necessary virtues of a strong and pious king:

> "Hinc est, honoratissime Rex et princeps, quod varietas virtutam, qua vester intellectualis animus interius decoratur, omnium anglicorum ac subditorum vestrorum corda exemplariter inflammat et adurit."[3]

1. Genet, p.168.

2. Several abridged Latin versions of the De Regimine Principum exist in fifteenth century manuscripts in the British Libary, Royal Manuscripts. They are: 5 C III, 6 B V and 12 B XXI.

3. Genet, op.cit., p.54. "Here, most honourable King and Prince, are the varieties of virtue with which your intellect is adorned, so that they may kindle and influence the hearts of all the English and your subjects by your example."

The scheme was to be a description of the six steps, each representing a virtue, which led up to Solomon's throne of wisdom. The six material elements in the throne would next be described as these again symbolised virtues. Finally the four gems of the king's crown were to be considered and these stood for the four estates of the realm and the contribution each should make to the common weal.

The imagery employed in the tract was, as might be expected from clerks, similar to that used in the sermons of the time.[1] It should have proved particularly appealing to a prince such as Henry who had a strong proclivity to piety. The other predominant influence in the structure and content of the piece was undoubtedly Egidio's De Regimine. Not only did the author use a great deal of material from that work, including whole unaltered passages,[2] but, to some extent, he adopted the three subject areas into which the earlier treatise was organised. The first part dealt primarily with the personal virtues of the prince, the second with his relations with his wife, officials and counsellors and the third with the various components of the kingdom. There were, nevertheless, considerable variations from the De Regimine. The tone of the work was more strongly Christian than the original. There were only forty seven classical references and these were almost entirely taken from Egidio or other medieval authorities: in comparison there were one hundred and twenty seven biblical quotations, forty seven patristic references and eighty quotations from later Christian writers.[3] In chapter III of part I the writer urged Henry to make peace with France and then painted an ecstatic picture of how, once these Christian rivalries had been settled, he might achieve the glory of liberating

1. Genet, op.cit., p.47, final paragraph.

2. Ibid., pp.64-5, 131.

3. Ibid., Tables of Texts cited, pp.169-173.

the Holy Land from the malignant dragon of paganism. More practical thoughts prevailed, however, in the next chapter where warfare in defence of a prince's right was justified and Henry's title to the French throne vindicated. At this point a long passage from Egidio, taken from the third part of his treatise, was interpolated.[1]

The second part adhered, on the whole, fairly closely to the subject matter and sentiments of Egidio but, owing to the constraints of relating it to the materials of Solomon's throne, the organisation was rather different. Although broadly based on book II, part II of Egidio, some of the advice was clearly addressed to the particular circumstances the king faced. Doubts as to the wisdom of his choice of household advisers and over-generous dispensation of patronage may have been reflected in chapter VI in which he was advised to choose men of standing for his council who would help him maintain a worthy estate:

> "Et ne publicum scandalum oriatur, considerate ut vestra domus regia digne et laudabiliter sustentetur, sicut sustentabatur diebus regum predecessorum vestrorum."[2]

He also suggested that the advice of more than one counsellor should be sought before a decision was taken. This last might well reflect the writer's private opinion of the quality of the king's judgement.

The third part deviated considerably from the two classical texts which were the foundation for the last part of Egidio's work, the Politics of Aristotle and

1. Genet, op.cit., pp.83-85.

2. Ibid., p.142. "And lest public scandal should arise, take thought so that your household shall be sustained with praise and dignity as it was during the rule of your predecessors."

the De Re Militari of Vegetius. The components of a kingdom were considered but it was a medieval state not a classical 'polis' that was described. The author also made it clear that he was not generalising but considering the strengths and weaknesses of the English nobility, clergy and laity of the mid fifteenth century.[1] The appeal to the nobility to defend the Church, for example, might have recalled the last decades of the fourteenth century, when the Lollards were long able to survive the enmity of the orthodox hierarchy due to the protection they enjoyed from some magnates. Henry's father and grandfather had finally driven their heresy underground. Similarly the satisfaction at the effective way in which England's universities trained doctors to combat heresy, and at the royal policy of fostering learning, probably again reflected the personal interests of Henry VI:

> "Harum namque universitatum saluberrima fama, ac clericorum innumerabilium inexplicabilis sciencia, regnum vestrum Anglie in Curia Romana ac aliis transmarinis regionibus, per vestros clericos ambassiatores famosissime sublimavit. Sic perpetua gloria tante regalie que sic scienciam superexaltat et elevat in sublime, que in domo domini candelebra lucencia erigere festinat, ad viciorum ac viciosorum tenebras extirpandas."[2]

1. Genet, op.cit.,p. 149.

2. Ibid., p.156. "For the most salubrious reputation of these universities and the incredible knowledge of innumerable clerks has most gloriously raised the credit of your English kingdom in the Roman Curia and other countries across the sea through your clerical ambassadors. Thus perpetual glory to royalty raises up and exalts knowledge, as in the house of the Lord the candle bearer hastens to set up the candelabra, so that the darkness of vice and the vicious may be overcome."

The final encomium to Henry's kingly virtues carried, perhaps, an intuition of the troubles that were soon to come when his manifest incapacity revived the old debate concerning which of the descendants of Edward III had the right to rule:

> "...ramus humore gracie repletus in arborem frondescat et preoccupet faciem regni iure hereditario ac brachio prepotenti.[1] Timeant irreparabili tremore, ac formident ineffabili pavore, qui regale nomen congruis honoribus non honorant."[2]

Just before his edition was published, Genet received a notice from Dr Jeffs of the similarity between the first part of the Tractatus and the sermon preached by the chancellor, John Stafford, bishop of Bath and Wells at the opening of the parliament of 1442.[3] The sermon took the moral virtues symbolised by the six steps of Solomon's throne as its theme. Genet observed that there was no strict correlation between the virtues described in the Tractatus and by Stafford and

1. Probably a reference to an old prophecy purporting to have been made by Edward the Confessor on his deathbed in which the disruption of the rightful line of succession was compared to the severance of a brance from a tree. Vita Beati Eduardi Regis et Confessoris, Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, pp.359-77, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls Series (London, 1858), p.375.

2. Genet, op. cit., p.168. "...the branch which is full of sap may grow well on the tree and the condition of a kingdom may be secured by hereditary right and the arms of the powerful. They who do not accord the royal name suitable honour must fear irreparable harm and indescribable terror."

3. Rotuli Parliamentorum, ed. J. Strachey and R. Blyke, 1767-77, vol. V, pp.35-6.

that the sources referred to were different but conceded that:

> "...it may be thought that Stafford knew the Tractatus - or that its author knew of Stafford's sermon".[1]

Had there been further time for deliberation and had he held the opinion expressed above, that the Tractatus could not have been written before 1445, rather more might have been said. The virtues attached to the six steps of the throne are close and, in some cases, identical. When there is a different emphasis, a logical explanation is available.

The hypothesis offered here about the relationship of Staffords' sermon and the Tractatus is based on the assumption that the former preceded the latter by at least three years. Stafford, a man of learning, probably composed the sermon himself, perhaps with the help of clerical advisors who included the orator who eventually wrote the Tractatus. The bishop was a longstanding servant of the house of Lancaster[2] and would have been concerned to present his royal master to parliament as an embodi-ment of traditional kingly virtues. These were: good intentions, humility, warm disposition towards Peace and Love, prudence, diligent execution of the Law and perseverance. Within the scope of a short report of the sermon it is to be expected that many of the nuances would have been lost. Some phrasing is, nevertheless, reminiscent of the Tractatus, the stress on the tranquility to be gained from peace, for example. The range of sources quoted by Stafford is also impressive, the bible, Seneca, Augustine, Gregory and Ambrose, only the last, incidentally, does not figure somewhere in the Tractatus.

1. Genet, op.cit., p.47.

2. Griffiths, op.cit., cites many episodes from his long career. See also Dictionary of National Biography vol.53, 1898, pp. 454-5. and A.B.Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500, (Oxford, 1957-9), 3 vols, vol 3, p.1750. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Tanner 198 contains a "carmen de prerogativa regis" addressed to him fols 15-16 v.

The orator and his friend the theologian probably used Stafford's sermon as their starting point. The steps imagery was employed for the first six chapters of the Tractatus developed by many learned examples and references.[1] They progressed to write of the throne itself and the gems in Solomon's crown, matters which had not been touched on in the sermon. The emphasis was also different for this was a private policy document specifically intended for Henry. He was to be confirmed in the virtuous life he led, encouraged to maintain his enthusiam for peace with France and advised to take counsel before making decisions. These policies were characteristic of the Beaufort faction which included other prominent clerics such as Adam Moleyns and Stafford, by then bishop of Canterbury and a leader himself in the negotiations for the king's marriage. The prevailing atmosphere in the Lancastrian court in the late 1440s during the eclipse of the belligerent Gloucester and the triumph of the Beaufort/Suffolk faction, would have been most congenial for the production of the Tractatus.

Many of the clerks who surrounded Henry VI were of high intellectual calibre. It was from this milieu that the eloquent and persuasive Tractatus de Regimine Principum undoubtedly came and it seems to have been intended exclusively for the king. The advice mixed the traditional wisdom of the ancients and Christian writers with moderate and practical suggestions as to how he should rule his kingdom. Henry inherited the popular Regement of Princes presented to his father by Hoccleve. He was also the recipient of Lydgate and de Burgh's Secrees and for many years the wise counsel of Sir John Fortescue was available to him. Yet it was already apparent by the 1440s that he was incapable of distinguishing between good and bad advice and he increasingly gave his trust to those who were more likely to give him the latter.

1. The subjects of the chapters were not dissimilar to those mentioned in the sermon namely: humility, charity or love, peace, good disposition or intentions, perseverance and a reconciliation by the king of the body with the spirit.

The III Consideracions now survive in three manuscripts all dating from the fifteenth century. The first is in Cambridge and is incomplete;[1] it shares the volume with the encyclopaedic Sidrac in the English metrical version of Hugh of Campdene[2] and the Scrope/Worcester translation of the Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers.[3] Since the latter work was revised after March 1472, the book must date from the last part of the century. The only indication of ownership is the name: "Le : Fludd" on folio 1. The second,[4] at Harvard, occurs in a volume of miscellaneous works, several by Lydgate, mainly written by John Shirley and probably completed by him in about 1440. The III Consideracions are, however, in another hand and may have been added later. Apart from the link with Shirley there are no indications of ownership before the nineteenth century.[5] There is, finally, a particularly interesting copy in the Bodleian Library[6] which also contains English translations of Alain Chartier's Quadrilogue Invectif[7] and the Secretum

1. Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.5.6., fol. 68.

2. M.R. James, The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge (Cambridge, 1902), vol.III, pp.310-11. Also H.D.L. Ward, Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, vol.I (London, 1883), pp.915-20.

3. Buhler, Dicts, op.cit., p.xxvi.

4. Massachusetts, Houghton Library, English MS 530, fol. 34.

5. S. de Ricci and W.J. Wilson, Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada, vol.I (New York, 1935), pp.966-7.

6. Oxford, Bodleian Library, University Coll. MS 85, fol. 136.

7. Fifteenth Century English Translations of Alain Chartier's 'Le Traité de L'Espérance' and 'Le Quadrilogue Invectif', ed. M.S. Blayney, E.E.T.S., Original Series, vol.II, no.281 (London, 1980)

Secretorum[1] as well as two poems added in the sixteenth century.

MS University College 85 may be the original as it is closer than the other two to the French. The scribe of this volume, Ricardus Franciscus, is well known to palaeographers who have compiled an impressive list of his work.[2] In addition to routine productions such as a Book of Hours[3] and the Statutes of London,[4] he seems to have specialised in copying English translations of fashionable French texts of writers such as Christine de Pisan, Honore Bouvet and Alain Chartier.[5] The provenance of the manuscript remains a mystery; despite its opulent decoration and the appearance of a crest and motto on folios 1 and 35v, it has not been possible to identify the owner. The text was obviously produced for the bearer of the crest as it appears on folio 1 as an integral part of the border decoration which has been specially designed to accommodate it.[6] The date is equally a matter of uncertainty: Coxe merely allocates it to the fifteenth century;[7] Blayney considers the date to be later than 1450, probably

1. Manzalaoui, op.cit., Introduction, pp.xxxix-xl.

2. K.L. Scott, 'A Mid-Fifteenth Century English Illuminating Shop and its Customers', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, vol.31, 1968, pp.170-96, p.170, n.3. Also O. Pächt and J.J.G. Alexander, Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Oxford, 1966-73), vol.I, pp.54-55, 57, and vol.III,p.98.

3. British Library, Harley MS 2915.

4. San Marino, Huntingdon Library, MS 932. The scribe's name and the date 1447 occur in this MS.

5. Respectively Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 570 which was produced for Sir John Fastolf and bears his motto 'Me fault faire 1450' on f.93; MS Ashmole 764 and MS University Coll. 85.

6. Blayney, op.cit., vol.I, frontispiece and Introduction, pp.ix-xvi, vol.II, p.39.

7. H.O. Coxe, Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Oxford Colleges (Oxford, 1972), vol.I, republished from the edition of 1852, p.25.

as late as 1475; Genet describes it as belonging to the mid fifteenth century;[1] and Manzalaoui thinks the style and language are typical of the middle of the century.[2] Franciscus is known to have worked for Sir John Fastolf[3] and, although this particular manuscript was clearly not produced for him, it may well have been written for a member of his circle who shared his literary tastes. In any case it is probable that University College MS 85 is the earliest existing copy of the English translation of the III Consideracions; whether or not it is the original text must remain a matter for speculation.

The translation is faithfully based on an anonymous treatise written in France in 1347 called L'estat et le gouvernement comme les princes et seigneurs se doivent gouverner. This was produced as a result of the request to his council of "un prince de royal noblesse", probably either Charles, count of Evreux and king of Navarre, or John, duke of Normandy and later king of France, for a description of temporal government. Only one good manuscript of the French original survives[4] and no printed edition has been made.

The III Consideracions is only a fraction of the length of the De Regimine Principum of Egidio Colonna on which it is based. Whilst the author retained the structure of the original, he wisely resisted the temptation to compress the whole of its contents into so brief a text. The resulting treatise dealt with themes from the De Regimine which were considered to be of outstanding

1. Genet, op.cit., p.174.

2. Manzalaoui, op.cit. (thesis), vol.I, pp.352-4. He suggests that some calligraphic decoration at the end of the Secretum might represent the date '1451' or '1481'. Having looked at the manuscript and compared the figures with similar ones at the end of the other two works, I believe them simply to be decorative.

3. Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 570.

4. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1233 (Y 26).

importance, presumably because they were seen to have practical application to the political context of France in the mid fourteenth century. It is divided into fifteen chapters but the three books of Egidio's great work were not given equal coverage. After a brief introduction, prefaced in the French original by dedicatory verses, the author dealt in chapters three and four with the virtues a good prince should foster. He was urged to know himself since, as a man, he contained elements of all creation from God down to the beasts and the produce the earth. This advice which contrasted man the microcosm with the macrocosm of the Universe was imputed, incorrectly, to Aristotle's Liber Sex Principiorum:

> "...yf the prince or greete estate will consi(d)re and knowe him self as it is affore rehersyd, he shall knowe God in his werkys, he shall love him and doute him, sith he that well knoweth God will love him, and he that will love hym will dreede hym for there is no verray love with out dowtaunce, as from the subgiet unto the souvereyne extendinge."[1]

The government of his household and estates was covered equally peremptorily in chapters five to eight. The use of his revenue, in fact, occupied most of this section. He was strongly advised to divide it into three parts and to use some for his personal needs, some for charity and rewards for his servants and to store the remainder in his treasury for use in time of emergency. The third part of the treatise, chapters nine to fifteen, is more than twice as long as the first and second. It dealt with the third area covered by Egidio, the

1. Genet, op.cit., p.183.

considerations to be observed in the good government of a prince's realm. Wisdom, providence, justice and mercy were identified as the qualities that were most needed if the prince was to be successful. The tale of Rehoboam and his foolish young counsellors was told to urge the necessity of wisdom. A more recent story, from an unidentified source, was used in the last chapter which told how St Louis always noted down the names of men of wise and honest reputation so that he might appoint them to official posts when vacancies arose. The final two pages were devoted to warfare: the justification for going to war in the first place and the consideration that a prince should first put his trust in God rather than superiority in numbers or strength of arms. This attitude together with the words with which the author concluded the work imply that he had little interest in warfare and realised that his master had access to greater authorities:

> "I ... speke no more of the governaunce of a Prince in tyme of his werres, but yf it be pleasire to my Prince to have more plenure and parfyte knowlege of a Princys reule and governaunce in his werres, let him beholde and see Vegecius in hys treaty full souffisauntly made upon the ffeet of chyvalrye, and also the III de booke of Gyles made of the regiment and governaunce of Princes, and in the bookys of othir divers clerkys which more largely and pleneurly entretith of this matere."[1]

The most important questions which arise concerning the III Consideracions must be those of its relationship with Egidio's De Regimine, the degree to

1. Genet, op.cit., p.209

which the French author was attempting to give advice to his master which was specifically appropriate to the political situation in mid fourteenth century France and how far the English translator may have wished his intended audience to take the advice to apply to their own circumstances. A brief comparison of the English text with the French translation of Egidio by Henri de Gauchi suggests that the content as opposed to the structure of the III Consideracions deviates substantially from its original.[1] Genet devoted very little space to this question, he merely described the work as a translation of Egidio. The tone of the later work is strongly religious and biblical quotations far outnumber references to Aristotle or other classical authors whereas Egidio made very few references to Christian sources. Nor do the classical quotations which the author does make coincide with those of Egidio. None of the six references to Aristotle and single references to Boethius, Dionysius Cato and Justinian have been found in the earlier work. The anonymous author, who may well have been a cleric, shunned the pagan histories of Valerius Maximus, made his lack of interest in Vegetius very clear and quoted instead from the Bible, from the thirteenth century canonist Accursius and from an unknown source on the life of St Louis. Much of what he actually said is to be found in Egidio, yet both writers were drawing on the tradition of works of instruction for princes which was already established before the impact of the newly translated Aristotelian corpus on Christendom in the thirteenth century. The freedom with which the author of the III Consideracions deviated from the content of the De Regimine allowed innovatory elements to appear within the extremely conservative framework of the treatise. He seems to have wished to avoid involvement with the political conflicts of his day; nevertheless, ideas about reform current

1. Genet, op.cit., General Introduction, p.xiv, n.35 and pp. 174-9.

in the court circle were voiced. Apart from the traditional generalities about justice and mercy, two issues seem to be treated in a more particular and practical fashion; the recommendations as to how the royal income should be husbanded and advice about the wise choice of counsellors and officials. Taken in conjunction with the author's preface stating that such a work had been requested by his prince, it is unlikely that either of them regarded it as simply a conventional catalogue of princely virtues. The subtleties of fourteenth century French programmes of political reform are unlikely to have conveyed much to English readers. The advice about careful financial management and the employment of ministers of wisdom and integrity would, however, coincide very precisely with popular views of good government.

The reasons for the translation of the III Consideracions into English and the degree to which it may have been adapted in the process remain to be discussed. Much depends upon the evidence for and against Oxford University MS 85 being the original text of the translation. If it was, there is a strong presumption that it was produced at the request of the owners of the mysterious crest: two arms embowed vested azure, holding between the arms proper a garb or. The translator did not identify himself; he may have been of low status, a scribe or cleric of the patron's household perhaps. If this manuscript is simply a copy, however, an original preface or epilogue in which the translator was named may have been lost. Since two of the surviving copies of the III Consideracions have links with Sir John Fastolf's circle,[1] and given the taste he is known to have had for works such as Christine de Pisan's Othea,

1. Richardus Franciscus, the presumed scribe of MS 85. also wrote Laud Misc. 570 for Fastolf, see above pp.220-21. Trinity College, Cambridge, 0.5.6. contains William Worcester's revision of Scrope's Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers as well as the III Consideracions.

it is in the direction of the knight or his associates that it is logical to look for a patron of the translation.

Genet notes every deviation the English translation makes from the French text. They are few and insignificant. It could be that the two main proposals combined in the original; that royal revenues should be husbanded and that counsellors should be chosen with care, met the needs of the middle years of the reign of Henry VI without a requirement for further amendment. Whoever requested the translation, they clearly expected a faithful rendering of the original; it is possible, in any case, that the translator would not have been equal to independent thought on the high matters of princely duties and qualities. Two aspects of the work may be taken as negative evidence, however, that the patron was not Henry VI. Had the king been the recipient of the translation, this glorious fact would surely have been recorded both in the original and in subsequent copies. Also there is a passage at the end of the first part of chapter XV that would be as unwelcome to a king who was already showing sensitivity about his reputation for feebleness in the 1440s[1] as it would be relevant to a group of gentry whose morale and material prosperity were declining with the deteriorating situation in both England and France:

> "Salamon, whan he first come unto the governaunce of the reaume of I(s)rael, he founde it in evill poynt and in greet adversite; and that caused him to be sage and wyse and to studie how he might it refourme and well governe. But Roboam, his son, founde the seide reaume in greet richesse and in greet prosperite, soo that desired no

1. Wolffe, op.cit., pp.16-18, for criticisms of Henry's failures in the 1440s and the punishment of those who made them.

> kunnyng ne grace well to governe, but governed amys so ferforthely that he lost by his mysgovernaunce the X partes of his reaume."[1]

The prince was also advised against allowing his wife to meddle in state affairs.[2]

We may conclude that the English translation of the III Consideracions is a faithful reproduction of the mid fourteenth century French treatise based on Egidio Colonna's De Regimine Principum and other Christian works of the genre. It was probably not translated by a gentleman such as Stephen Scrope or John Shirley who would have felt impelled to identify themselves. There is no evidence to connect it with any of the more influential members of the court circle or with the king himself. Indeed, since its title did not include the magic words 'De Regimine Principum' it could not instantly lay claim to the reflected glory of Egidio Colonna and the high esteem in which he was held in contemporary England. The translation was probably made in the middle years of the century, not far from 1450. It is likely to have been commissioned by someone who had already developed a taste for the literature of the court of the Valois kings. The provenance of two of the surviving manuscripts might indicate a connection with the circle of Sir John Fastolf.

There is ample evidence that the De Regimine Principum of Egidio Colonna was known to both the Lancastrian and the Yorkist kings and princes and that most of them either possessed or had access to a copy. The Royal Library in the

1. Genet, op.cit., p.206.

2. Ibid., p.204.

British Library contains an opulent manuscript of French workmanship, profusely illustrated and richly illuminated, which was presented to Margaret of Anjou at the time of her marriage by John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury.[1] Apart from the French translation of the De Regimine Principum by Henri de Gauchi, the volume also contains various romances and works by Alain Chartier, Honoré Bouvet and Christine de Pisan as well as the statutes of the Order of the Garter in French. The whole book was clearly conceived as a delicate compliment to the royal bride offering her familiar works from the Valois court circle in her native tongue and an explanation of the major order of chivalry in her new country. Her son, Edward of Lancaster, was rather too young to profit from it whilst his parents retained their English throne. It almost certainly passed from their possession in July 1460 when the Yorkists took London and gained control of the contents of all the royal palaces, manors, castles and lodges in a wide area round the city. It is inconceivable that Margaret or Henry would have retained such a large book during their incessant flights and wanderings during the next years and the volume was in the Royal Library by 1535.[2] Edward IV, his brothers and children may reasonably be assumed to have had the use of this book.

Edward may also have had an independent copy of the De Regimine Principum. The account of the king's Great Wardrobe for the twentieth year of his reign includes an invoice from "Piers Bauduyn, Stationer ... for binding, gilding and dressing of a book called le Gouvernemente of Kynges and Princes-xvis".[3] It is impossible to prove that this was the work by Egidio or to decide whether it was

1. British Library, Royal MS 15 E VI, c.1445.

2. G.P. Warner and J.P. Gilson, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and Kings Collections, (4 vols, 1921) vol.II, p.179. Richmond Catalogue no.101.

3. British Library, MS Harley 4780, f.21r.

in French or English as the title is a mixture of the two languages. Finally, there is a fifteenth century Latin manuscript of the De Regimine in Sion College, London, which bears on folio 1 the inscription, "Agidius de Regimine. Liber illustrissimus Principis Ducis Gloucestr". Neil Ker considered that the hand was rather late for it to refer to Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who died in 1447.[1] The last three words have been all but erased, a likely fate for any inscription referring to Richard, duke of Gloucester and king of England, during the Tudor period. There is evidence that he and his brothers received a sound education:[2] the De Regimine Principum might well have been regarded as suitable for study during the 1450s for the sons of the putative heir to the throne,[3] and he may eventually have acquired his own copy of the book.

The houses of Lancaster and York were following rather than leading taste in possessing the De Regimine Principum, for it was already well known in England in the fourteenth century. "I livre de governement de Roys & du prynces"[4] appears in the inventory of the goods of Sir Simon Burley after his execution in 1388. Evidence gathered from surviving copies and contemporary references make it clear that the Latin original was widely available, while the French version was also owned by several Englishmen including a fragment

1. N.R. Ker, Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, vol.I, London (Oxford, 1969), pp.282-3, Sion College, Arc. L. 40 2/L 26.

2. C.D. Ross, Edward IV, (London, 1974) pp.7-9.

3. Before the birth of Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1453, Richard of York had never been officially recognised by Henry VI as his heir.

4. V.J. Scattergood, 'Two Medieval Book Lists', The Library, 5th Series, vol.xxiii, 1968, pp.236-9. Thomas Woodstock, duke of Gloucester, who died mysteriously whilst in the custody of his nephew, Richard II, in 1397, also had a copy, V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne, eds. English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages, (London, 1983) p.34.

belonging to Humphrey, duke of Gloucester.[1] Forty nine Latin manuscripts dating before 1500 survive; some of them are incomplete and a few comprise only the tables from the beginning of the work. There are also two contemporary references to books called 'De Regimine Principum'.[2] One, left in the will of an officer of York ecclesiastical court in 1440, was certainly by Egidio since his name was given.[3] The author of the other is not mentioned; it occurs in a letter from the scribe, William Ebesham, to Sir John Paston in about 1479.[4] He might have been charging him for a manuscript which still survives, Lansdowne 285, in which case the book referred to is Lydgate/Burgh's Secrees of the Old Philisoffres.[5] If, as Buhler suggests, the latter refers to a different manuscript, Ebesham may have produced the treatise by Egidio for his courtier patron.

Egidio Colonna was closely identified with orthodox catholicism and with the temporal authority of the medieval papacy: he wrote a celebrated vindication of it in the De Ecclesiastica Potestate. His works were neither prized nor sought after in post-Reformation England; some of them may well have been

1. Cambridge University Library, Ee II 17. "Cest livre est a moy Homfrey duc de Gloucestre du don Moss. Robert Ross chevalier mon cousin." Three other French manuscripts survive.

2. See Appendix 1.

3. 'Testamenta Eboracensia', A Selection of Wills from the Registry at York, ed. J. Raine for the Surtees Society, vol.xxx, 1855, part II, p.78.

4. British Library Additional MS 43491, fol.13 & 26.

5. For a discussion of this point see C.F. Buhler, 'Sir John Paston's "Grete Booke", a Fifteenth Century "Best Seller"', Modern Language Notes, lvi, 1941, pp.345-51 and G.A. Lester, Sir John Paston's 'Grete Boke', A Descriptive Catalogue with an Introduction of British Library Lansdowne MS 285, Bury St Edmunds, 1984, pp. 34-48. The latter claims that Lansdowne 285 is the 'Grete Boke' but provides no satisfactory explanation for the discrepancy between its contents and those listed in the Ebesham correspondence in Additional MS 43491.

deliberately destroyed. The survival of such a significant number of copies of his De Regimine Principum, therefore, is a persuasive testimony to their popularity, not just amongst the religious and priests, the owners of most of the earlier copies, but also with the nobility and gentry. This popularity, however, did not extend much beyond the end of the fifteenth century. Bruni finds no printed edition of any of Egidio's works in England until the nineteenth century. Even then the De Regimine appears only through the medium of editions of Hoccleve's Regement of Princes.[1]

In conclusion some consideration must be devoted to the question of why no English translation of this very popular and prestigious work was made during the later part of the fifteenth century. The answer must be a matter for speculation rather than proof and there could be several reasons for this rather surprising situation. The nature of the work itself did not make it instantly attractive to the unscholarly. It is long and throughout adheres to a theme which is based on the ethical system of Aristotle and, latterly, the De Re Militari of Vegetius. Unlike the Secretum Secretorum or the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers it cannot be treated as an encyclopaedia. It is not inherently entertaining or easy to follow like the Epistle of Othea or the Game and Playe of Chess. Those ecclesiastics and laymen who possessed it in Latin probably did so because they were equal to reading it in the original language or because they felt it to be an essential component of a library rather than a book they intended to read assiduously. Furthermore, from 1415 the book called The Regement of Kings and Princes by Thomas Hoccleve was widely known.[2] Much

1. G. Bruni, 'Saggio Bibliographico sulle Opere Stampate di Egidio Romano', Analecta Augustiniana, vol.xxiv, 1961, pp.331-355.

2. Thirteen copies dating from the fifteenth century have been identified. See Appendix 1.

of Egidio's work plus extracts from the Secretum Secretorum and the Playe of Chess were available in this pleasant form. Indeed some of his readers may have been unaware that it was not a faithful translation of Egidio. Men of affairs like Sir John Fastolf, George Ashby and Lord Rivers were prepared to devote considerable trouble to the translation of works that were likely to be of practical use to them and their associates. They would surely have doubted the wisdom of lavishing time and money on a work as long and inaccessible as the De Regimine Principum. The obscurity in which the one full English translation has languished ever since the early fifteenth century vindicates such an opinion.

(iv) The 'De Re Militari' of Flavius Renatus Vegetius

Like the Liber Philosophorum the De Re Militari or Epitoma Rei Militari by Vegetius does not immediately appear to form part of the canon of books of advice to princes. A respectable product of late classical antiquity, dedicated to one of the emperors who were called Valentinian, it takes a very specialised view of the problems of government in its exclusive concern with the art of war. Yet the frequency with which it was associated with books such as the Secretum or the De Regimine Principum[1] and the number of princes and nobles who can be shown to have possessed it in the later middle ages, indicates that it was regarded by contemporaries as a manual of government. Indeed it could be seen as a counterpart of the Secretum in imparting to rulers the techniques for achieving victory over their enemies just as the former gave them the necessary knowledge to rule their own subjects successfully. These two virtues: the ability to protect the realm from internal strife by the maintenance of Justice

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Auct F 3.2 and 3.3 for example.

and from external enemies by strength of arms, were commonly agreed by moralists to be the essential attributes of a good prince.

Vegetius was widely known throughout the middle ages for, unlike the pseudo classical texts discussed above, the original was in accessible Latin. The 1885 edition of Lang identified ten Latin manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century or earlier which survived in English libraries. He also indicated that another seventeen probably existed either in libraries, private ownership or booksellers' collections. In addition he referred to four copies of English translations, two in French[1] and to three manuscripts containing abbreviated versions.[2]

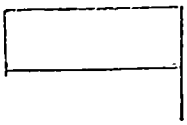
The most impressive testimony to the esteem in which Vegetius was held in the fifteenth century is to be found in the English prose translation of the Latin original that was produced in 1408 and the ten copies of it which survive. The three earliest of these contain a colophon which reads: "the book ... was translated and turned fro Latin into Englishe at the ordinaunce and byddynge of the worthi and worshipful lord sire Thomas of Berkeley to gret disport and daly aunce of lordes and alle worthy werryours that ben apassed by wey of age al labour and travaillyng, and to grete informacioun and lernyng of yonge lordes and knyghtes that ben lusty and loveth to here and see and to use dedus of armes and chivalrye. The turnynge of this book into English was wretoun and endud in vigil of al halwes, the year of oure lord a thousand and four hundred

1. Three French translations were made between the late thirteenth and the late fourteenth century. The first by Jean de Meung, the next by Jean de Vignay and finally an anonymous version. P. Contamine, 'The War Literature of the Middle Ages', War, Literature and Politics in the Late Middle Ages, ed. C.T. Allmand, (Liverpool, 1976), pp.102-121.

2. C. Lang, Flavi Vegeti Renati Epitoma Rei Militari, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, (Leipzig, 1885), Introduction, pp.xxiii-xviii. Also see Appendix 1.

and eighte the Xe year of kyng Henry the ferthe. To him and to us alle god graunt grace of our offendynde, space to our amendynge and his face to seen at oure endyndg. Amen.

This is his name that turned this book fro Latyn into Englishe.

worshepful  toun".

The identity of the translator who chose the ambiguity of a rebus has been much discussed. Early opinion favoured John Trevisa who was vicar of Berkeley and who certainly translated the Polychronicon and the De Proprietatibus Rerum in the late fourteenth century. Perry demonstrated, however, in 1926 that he had died in 1402.[1] Science suggested John Walton, canon of Osney as the translator on the grounds that he seems to have produced an English metrical version of Boethius for Elizabeth Berkeley, presumably the daughter of earl Thomas, in 1410.[2] His view was supported by Miss Garvin who started to prepare an edition of the Vegetius. She produced some not entirely convincing linguistic evidence and some more impressive thoughts on the use of the rebus. John Walton may have come from a family of masons and have inherited their custom of signing work in this fashion. It is to be regretted that the introduction to the 1973 edition of the English De Re Militari by Fallwell does not advance the discussion of this problem further. He was clearly interested primarily in the language rather than the historical context of the work and relied on the notes of Miss Garvin to which he had access.[3] The contemporary literary association of Walton with

1. A.J. Perry, Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum etc., (London, EETS, Original Series, 167, 1925), pp.lxv and xcvii.

2. M. Science Boethius: De Consolatione Philosophiae, (London, 1927, EETS, Original Series, 170), pp.xlvii - 1.

3. M.L. Fallwell, De Re Militari: An Edition of the Middle English Prose Translation of Vegetius' Epitoma Rei Militaris, Vanderbilt University Ph.D., 1973. Microfilm, pp. 22-30.

the Berkeley family certainly makes him a strong candidate for the credit of translating both Vegetius and the De Regimine Principium which is associated with it in the early manuscript, Bodleian MS Digby 233. Orme has recently entered the "spot the translator" competition by suggesting "Longtoun" or "Langtoun". He bases this on the claim that the rebus represented a musical symbol for long. The symbol he illustrates in his footnote, however, is of quite a different shape from the rebus I have seen on several manuscripts including the early Digby 233.[1] He seems to be unaware of the Fallwell edition of Vegetius.

The purpose of the translation was quite clearly stated in the colophon: it was intended for the pleasure of elderly lords and other worthy warriors and for the instruction of young knights. Berkeley had been given the charge of all forces in Gloucester, Bristol and Somerset in 1405 to defend the country against the Welsh so it is likely that he took the second reason for the production of an accessible English version very seriously. The translator did not alter his Latin text in any very significant way although a few of the chapter headings and divisions were changed. He did, however, carry out a quasi editorial role by adding explanations and repetitions and emphasising points which he believed to be important.[2] He undoubtedly saw it as his function to do more than transmit unchanged the meaning of the original text. Many of the military terms were modernised, those which were hopelessly outmoded were sometimes omitted and modern weapons such as guns were referred to.[3] None of these modifications, however, radically impaired the character of the treatise which still closely resembled the original.

1. N. Orme, From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings& Aristocracy, 1066-1530, (London, 1984), p.186, n.24.

2. Fallwell, op.cit., p.4.

3. Ibid., pp.21-2.

Names of owners or scribes can be associated with six out of the ten surviving manuscripts. Bodleian MS Douce 291, considered by Fallwell to be the best and earliest text, bears an erased inscription which refers to John Smart who became Garter King of Arms in 1450. There are also indications that the work may previously have belonged to his father-in-law, William Brugges, who was Garter King of Arms for the thirty previous years. The name 'Thomas Rotheram' appears several times on the Gollancz manuscript (formerly Phillipps collection). He may well have been the Thomas Rotherham who was successively made bishop of Rochester, chancellor and archbishop of York by Edward IV. Had he been a bishop at the time the inscriptions were written, it is likely that his status would have been mentioned. Bodleian MS Land Misc 416 ends: "Scriptus Rhodo per Johannem Newton die 25 Octobris 1459". Pierpoint Morgan MS 775 is a miscellany which was prepared in the second half of the century for Sir John Astley. British Library, MS Lansdowne 285 includes a closing line: "... and his face to see at oure/endyng. Amen. Quod W. Ebesham". William Ebesham probably transcribed several of the items in this manuscript for Sir John Paston so yet again a work in this genre seems to be linked with the Norfolk literati.[1] Finally British Library, Royal MS 18 A XII, an opulent book, seems to have been specially produced for Richard III and Anne Neville as their arms appear on folios 1 and 45. In the king's possession Vegetius looks even more like a book of advice for princes, particularly since the prologue contains the sentiment:

> "... ffor/hit besemyth to no man: bettir thinges to konne:
> ne mo thinges to knowe that hit doth a prince whos teching/
> and doctrine may profite to alle his subgettis ..."[2]

1. I.A. Doyle, 'The work of a late fifteenth century scribe', Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, vol.xxxix, no. 2, 1957, pp.298-325.

2. Fallwell, op.cit., p.50 from MS Douce 291 fol. 4 verso.

A verse paraphrase of Vegetius's De Re Militari called the book of Knyghthode and Bataile[1] was written by a parson of Calais and presented to Henry VI. Apart from interpolations which will be discussed below, it kept fairly closely to Vegetius although it was shorter than the original as the translator omitted details about the Roman army that were outmoded by the fifteenth century. He appears to have shunned French versions and to have worked straight from the Latin original. He made it plain that he intended to adhere to Vegetius[2] and there is no evidence that he introduced other materials from authors unknown to the Roman writer.

The poem survives in three fifteenth century manuscripts: the one from Pembroke College, Cambridge, is undoubtedly the earliest in date as the king to whom it was dedicated was Henry VI.[3] It contains original material by the translator which enables a date to be assigned to the final version between November 1459 and July 1460. The two later manuscripts referred to Edward IV as king of England and the dedicatory proem was omitted as were seven stanzas that were very disparaging about the Yorkists at the beginning of part III.

The original material in the poem falls into three categories: Christian prayers and expostulations, details about naval warfare and the dedication to Henry VI and other political interpolations of a strongly Lancastrian character. The unique proem of eleven stanzas was preceded by a Latin heading:

> "Salve, festa dies. i. martis, Mavortis!
>
> avete Kalende. Qua Deus ad celum sublevat

1. Knyghthode and Bataile, A fifteenth century verse paraphrase of Flavius Vegetius Renatus' treatise De Re Militari, ed. Z.M. Arend and R. Dyboski (London, 1935), E.E.T.S., Original Series, no.201. References are made to this printed text.

2. Ibid., p.12, lines 306-319.

3. Pembroke College, Cambridge, MS 243. The others are British Library Cotton, Titus A XXIII, and Oxford, Bodleian, MS Ashmole 45.

ire David."[1]

The first three stanzas appear to describe a triumphant entry by Henry VI into the city of London. Dyboski in his Introduction believed that this must refer to the Loveday of reconciliation held between Henry VI, his Queen and Lancastrian followers and the Yorkists on March 25 1458.[2] It may well do so but, apart from the fact that that date should not strictly be described as "Kalende", stanza IV presents a problem:

> "Therof to the Unitee 'Deo gracias'
> In Trinitee! The Clergys and Knyghthode
> And Comynaltee better accorded nas
> Never then now; Now nys ther noon abode,
> But out on hem that fordoon Goddes forbode,
> Periurous ar, Rebell(ou)s and atteynte,
> So forfaytinge her lyif and lyvelode,
> Althouth Ypocrisie her faytys peynte."[3]

The first half seems to accord very well with the 1458 Loveday theory, but the second half clearly referred to the Yorkist lords who were not attainted until the month of November 1459. The period of composition is further fixed by the information in stanza II of part III:

> "O gracious our Kyng! Thei fleth his face.
> Where ar they now? Summe are in Irelonde,

1. Knyghthode and Bataile, op.cit., p.1. The first lines of stanza I on the same page provide a rough translation: "Hail, halyday devout! Alhail Kalende/Of Marche, wheryn David the Confessour/Commaunded is his kyngis court ascende."

2. Ibid., Introduction, pp.xvi-xviii.

3. Ibid., Proem, p.2.

In Walys other are, in myghti place,
And other han Calys with hem to stonde..."[1]

After his condemnation of the iniquity of the Yorkists the translator recounted how he went to Westminster where his "bille" was read to the king who received it well and consulted Lord Beaumont.[2] He was killed at Northampton on July 10 1460, so the poem cannot have been written later than the first half of that year. He read part of the work, liked it and gave permission for the translator to present it to the King. He then did so concluding the proem with a prayer in which he made the use to which it might be put quite plain:

"He (the King) redeth, and fro poynt to
poynt he secheth,
How hath be doon, and what is now to done;
His providence on aftirward he strecheth,
By see & lond; he wil provide sone
To chace his adversaryes everychone;
Thei hem by lond, thei hem by see asseyle;
The Kyng his Oratoure, God graunt his bone,
Ay to prevaile in knyghthode & bataile.
Amen."[3]

The identity of the translator was revealed in the proem where he described himself as a "person of Caleys".[4] He recorded the calamity his

1. Knyghthode and Bataile, op.cit., p.37. The flight of the earls of Warwick and March to Calais was, presumably, the occasion for the exile of the author.

2. The "bille" was probably a summary of what he intended to do.

3. Ibid., Proem, p.4, stanza XI.

4. Ibid., Proem, p.2, stanza V. Dyboski gives a list of the parish priests of Calais for the relevant period but does not suggest a particular candidate as translator. Introduction, p.xxiii.

Lancastrian loyalty had brought on him at the end of part IV. He hailed Calais his "porte saluz", and bemoaned his exile and poor circumstances which would continue until:

"..an other soort
Governe there, that by the kyng be sende."[1]

Presumably his personal troubles were not considered sufficiently dangerous to warrant omission by the copyists of the two later manuscripts as, unlike the proems to parts I and III, this was left in Titus A XXIII and Ashmole 45.

Apart from providing further evidence of the popularity of Vegetius in fifteenth century England and of the impact of the civil wars on one unfortunate Lancastrian supporter, this translation bears testimony to an important preoccupation of contemporary political commentators. The Libelle of English Policy, several of Fortescue's works and Knyghthode and Bataile all stress the importance of England's ability to exercise strong naval power.[2] Indeed the weakness of the Lancastrians in this respect had been a crucial factor in the misfortunes of the parson of Calais and was to make a vital contribution to Edward's ability to seize the Crown in 1461. The advice offered by the parson could have been profitably followed.

A few years after the end of the Yorkist dynasty, in 1489, William Caxton translated and printed Christine de Pisan's Livre des faits d'armes et de chevalerie[3] at the request of Henry VII. This is not strictly a translation of

1. Knyghthode and Bataile, op.cit., p.109, stanza 110.

2. C. Richmond, 'English Naval Power in the Fifteenth Century', History, vol. lii, 1967, pp. 1-15.

3. The Book of Faythes of Armes and of Chyvalrye, ed. A.T.P. Byles, (EETS, Original Series, no.189), Introduction, pp. xxix-xxx for a discussion of whether the date of printing should be 1489 or 1490.

Vegetius and was produced a few years beyond the scope of this study but a brief consideration of it would seem to be justified. Chapter 3 will suggest that Christine de Pisan's work was appreciated by a significant proportion of the English ruling class and at least two copies of the work in French survive which were in use in fifteenth century England.[1] No less than twenty copies of Caxton's edition have been identified.[2] Christine was reliant not only on Vegetius but also on Honoré Bouvet's L'Arbre de Batailles as well as Valerius Maximus and Frontinus and anonymous contemporary authorities. If little originality can be claimed for the thought in the treatise, the way in which the authoress chose to combine these earlier works throws light on the stage the theory of warfare had reached by the early fifteenth century.

Unlike Vegetius Christine chose to divide her work into four rather than five books. These dealt with the qualities required of a commander, strategy and the defence of towns and castles, the laws of war and finally, more laws of war and also the regulation of jousts. It is immediately apparent that her subject matter ranged over a much wider field than that covered by the military manuals of either Vegetius or Frontinus. Apart from omitting many of the sections which those authors had devoted to matters which were not relevant to late medieval fighting conditions, she used their subject matter out of sequence in contexts appropriate to the scheme of her book. It is even more important that she altered the whole emphasis of her work by devoting considerable space to a discussion of the laws of war and the code of chivalry. This gave her Fais an ethical dimension which was entirely characteristic of the French court

1. London, British Library, Royal 15 E VI. Presented by the earl of Shrewsbury to Margaret of Anjou as a marriage gift c.1445 and Royal 19 B xviii which dates from the middle of the century contains illuminated capitals which are English work.

2. Byles, op.cit., pp.xxxi-vi.

culture which she exemplified:

> "... we find a Christian, chivalric spirit which is utterly foreign to the De re militari. The Fayttes of Armes shows how the ideals of Christian chivalry tried to mitigate the practice of war".[1]

The application of this code, although it might be founded on Christian ethics was generally successful because it appealed to self interest, pride and profit. The laws of war upheld the status of the ruling caste and ensured that the victors would enjoy fitting material rewards and that the vanquished would receive humanitarian treatment.[2] It was generally recognised that the turning of Fortune's wheel would put a significant proportion of those who engaged in warfare in both categories in the course of an average lifetime.

Caxton's translation of the Fais entitled the Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye followed his original faithfully. The work was completed towards the end of his life and showed the advances he had made in his capacity to handle a French text from the mid 1470s. The very fidelity of his translation precluded the kind of interpolations that gave individuality to his much earlier Game and Playe of Chesse.[3] His epilogue to book four, however, does provide some interesting information concerning the circumstances which led to the production of the book and the reasons why Henry VII commissioned it. The king

1. D. Bornstein, 'Military Manuals in Fifteenth Century England' Medieval Studies, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1975, vol. 37, pp.469-77.

2. N. Keen, The Laws of War in the Middle Ages, London, 1965, Conclusions, pp.239-247.

3. See below, chap. 3.

clearly owned a copy of the French original and was aware of its contents for he:

> "wylled me to translate this said boke and reduce it in to our english and natural tonge/and to put it in enprynte to thende that every gentylman born to armes and all manere men of werre captayns/souldiours/vytayllers and all other shold have knowlege how they ought to behave theym in the faythes of warre e of bataylles/and so delyvered me the said book thenne my lord therle of Oxenford awayting on his said grace/".[1]

The intention that all those who engaged in warfare, however humble their estate, should use the treatise was reiterated lower down in the epilogue. The books of advice produced for Henry VI, Edward IV and their sons bore no sign that the authors had it in mind to make them available to a wider audience. The wording of Caxton's epilogue to the Ordre of Chivalry confined the advice concerning knightly conduct it contained to the nobility and gentry of England:

> "which book is not requysyte to every commyn man to have/ but to noble gentylemen that by their vertu entende to come and entre in to the noble ordre of chyuvalry."[2]

The first Tudor monarch should perhaps receive the credit for appreciating the potential use of the printing press for improving the expertise of all ranks

1. Byles, op.cit., p.291.
2. Crotch, op.cit., p.82.

within England's fighting forces.

The principal personal intervention by Caxton, apart from the conventional humility formula, came towards the end:

> "... I have not heard ne redde that ony prynce hath subdued his subgettis with lasse hurte and also holpen his neighbours and frendis out of this londe..."[1]

He seems to have taken the opportunity to congratulate Henry VII obliquely on his assumption of power and thus, presumably, to purge the embarrasment of of his own connection with the previous dynasty. His dedication of the Order of Chivalry to Richard III only a few years previously must have been well known in the court circle. The sentiment Caxton expressed, however, was more than a piece of sycophancy. His opinion of the excellence of subduing a realm with a minimum of bloodshed showed that he was in close accord with the ethical, humanitarian spirit which characterised the writings of Christine de Pisan. It also showed the printer's appreciation of the pragmatic approach to affairs which was to typify the governance of the first Tudor king.

Vegetius was undoubtedly available to Henry VI in various forms. He probably owned both Latin and French copies as well as the various versions of Egidio Colonna's De Regimine Principum which included, in part III, large portions of the De Re Militari. Yet the motivation of the parson of Calais is not hard to guess. He was a poor exile who had suffered for the Lancastrian cause, desperately anxious to ingratiate himself at court and to earn a

1. Byles, op.cit., p.292. See R.A. Griffiths and R.S. Thomas, The Making of the Tudor Dynasty. (Gloucester, 1985), pp.173-76 for the rewards Henry gave to those who had assisted his seizure of the throne.

pecuniary reward or office in return for his translation. In late 1459 and early 1460 the Lancastrians could enjoy the illusion that the defeat of Ludford and the attainting of their enemies at the Coventry parliament had put an end to civil conflict in England. Naval warfare preoccupied the translator and he wrote as if the Lancastrians had recently achieved victories. He may have envisaged the application of the wisdom of Vegetius to a reconquest of Calais and, perhaps, Ireland. The harsh reality of the next few months included his king's subjugation at Northampton and the recognition of the duke of York as the legitimate heir to the throne.

No evidence survives which indicates that the house of York possessed a copy of Vegetius in Latin, French or English before the early 1480s. It is very probable, however, given the conventional nature of their taste for books of advice, that the family owned at least one copy of the work. The metrical translation by the parson of Calais may also have passed to them after their victory in 1461. During the reign of Richard III a copy of the Berkeley English translation was apparently made specially for him.[1] Both his career as duke of Gloucester and his short period as king provide ample justification for the claim that he took both the art of government and the art of war very seriously.[2] The fact that the only book he seems to have commissioned was a copy of Vegetius in an accessible English translation, may be taken as a further indication of these predispositions.

1. See above p. 81.

2. C.D. Ross, Richard III (London, 1981)

The Secretum Secretorum, De Regimine Principum, De Re Militari and, to a lesser extent, Dicta Philosophorum were all well known and esteemed in England by the early fifteenth century. The association of so many English versions of these works with the princes and the court circle in the second half of the century indicates that the ruling classes had been supporting rather than leading scholarly taste in this respect.

Chapter 2

The Chaucerian Tradition: Hoccleve, Lydgate and Ashby

The title of this chapter refers to a literary tradition which flourished in fifteenth century England: the vernacular poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer so dominated the style of subsequent writers that it took the impact of the Italian sonnet in the early sixteenth century to displace him. Until then no poet of any consequence attempted much besides stanzas in rhyme royal or dealt with subjects that had not been treated by the master. Yet one genre that he did not tackle was advice to princes. It has, however, been recently suggested that both the tales of Sir Thopas[1] and Melibee[2] contain some political and moral precepts intended for Richard II, but there is no sign that the area was a major preoccupation for Chaucer. So it might seem that Hoccleve, Lydgate/Burgh and Ashby were being uncharacteristically independent of their master in choosing to produce major works on the subject. A consideration of the corpus of Chaucer's poems does not lead to such a conclusion. In the course of his career he undertook the translation of three popular works. Troilus and Criseyde and Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae were both, as far as medieval scholars were concerned, part of the classical heritage. The Romaunt of the Rose constituted a more recent example of an equally popular genre,French courtly, allegorical literature. The works of Hoccleve and Lydgate which are discussed below were heavily reliant on these literary traditions and their prologues indicate that they were undertaken for the

1. V.J. Scattergood,"Chaucer and the French War:Sir Thopas and Melibee", Court and Poet, ed. G.S. Burgess (Liverpool, 1981), pp.287-96.

2. Green has suggested that Chaucer attempted to advise the young king through the courtly, moral tale of Melibee, op.cit.,pp.142-3.

same reasons which motivated Chaucer. They were enhancing the education of their readers by making esteemed works accessible in English and responding to a perceived taste for such books at Court.

A further element of continuity which may be identified between Chaucer and the work of his fifteenth century followers is his robustly independent approach. One of his charms was his ability to take a pompous tale from Physiologus or Valerius Maximus and imbue it with iconoclastic wit and originality. Hoccleve and Ashby similarly showed themselves to be incapable of adhering to their official texts and constantly regaled the princely recipients of their advice with lively admonitions to rule well. Lydgate was more of a courtier and less original than his contemporaries but he too gave firm advice on occasions and indulged in massive, bookish irrelevancies which, in many places, altered the Secrees beyond recognition. Finally, both Chaucer and his followers had an essentially static conception of society and of the role of princes. Their sovereignty was unquestioned, limited only by the obligation laid upon all Christians to observe divine law in their dealings. The following discussion of these writers will attempt to demonstrate these characteristics, some of which were also manifested by advisers of princes who did not emulate Chaucer.

(i) "The Regement of Princes" by Thomas Hoccleve.

Hoccleve's Regement of Princes was produced between 1410 and 1413.[1] He made many comments about the political and social conditions of the time that had brought him to the state of depression which was the occasion for undertaking the poem. He also implied that he knew Chaucer and, possibly, Gower when he compared himself to them in the conventional humility formulas. He may well

1. From internal evidence the poem must have been written between the burning of John Badby in 1410 and the accession of Henry V in March, 1413.

have followed the lead given by the latter in addressing a didactic poem to his prince. The Regement proved very popular during the remainder of the century. The prestige of the dedication to Prince Henry, soon to become the hero king Henry V,[1] would ensure success as would the easy access it gave to three renowned works of princely instruction, previously only available in Latin and French. These were the Secretum Secretorum, the De Regimine Principum of Egidio Colonna and the Liber de Ludo Schacchorum of Jacobus de Cessolis. Hoccleve clearly stated his sources in the poem so he was probably aware of the attraction of these books, for medieval writers were not usually so meticulous in citing their references.

The beginning of the Prologue might well have been intended as travesty of a courtly introduction.[2] Hoccleve was wandering miserably in a field when he met a ragged old beggar. Despite the author's attempts to shake him off, he persisted in giving him good advice on how to conquer his depression until his wise words were finally heeded. After some probing the beggar discovered that the main cause of Hoccleve's misery was that he was not receiving his annuity for his work in the office of the Privy Seal regularly and he feared for his security in his old age. The beggar suggested that Hoccleve should send an appeal to prince Henry to secure the payment of his annuity. It could be accompanied by an entertaining piece such as a treatise on the duties of princes, based on authoritative sources such as the Secretum, but the presentation must be made without flattery. Hoccleve confessed that he had a poor

1. Henry V: The Practice of Kingship, ed. G.L. Harriss, (Oxford, 1985), see especially G.L. Harriss, "Introduction: the Exemplar of Kingship", pp. 1-29.

2. The text used is Hoccleve's Works, vol.III, The Regement of Princes, A.D. 1411-12, ed. F.J. Furnivall, E.E.T.S., Extra Series, 72 (London, 1897).

command of Latin and French so he would have to translate the originals into English.

Hoccleve started the poem with the pointed remark that, although he was short of money, he was rich in good will towards the prince. He was sure that Henry would know the three works on which his poem was based but he combined their wisdom into a form which could easily be consulted. He then proceeded in the body of the poem to list the virtues that a good king should possess. Insofar as he employed a model he was here following the example of Egidio Colonna who used a similar approach in book I, part II of the De Regimine Principum.[1] The virtues listed were not entirely the same or in the same order but the resemblance is closer than to Hoccleve's other principal authorities. The Cardinal Virtues figured prominently together with Dignity, Clemency, Fidelity, Patience, Magnanimity, Liberality and Chastity. From time to time prince Henry was addressed directly, usually when Hoccleve wished to link a particular virtue or its antithesis with contemporary manners. Despite the beggar's warning against flattery he took several opportunities to compliment the house of Lancaster:

> "Off magnanimite now wole I trete,
> That is to seyne, strong herte or grete corage,
> Whiche in knyghthode hath stablisshed hir sete.
> Ye, gracious Prince, of blode and of lynage
> Descendid ben, to have it in usage;
> Mars hath even ben frende to your worthi lyne;
> Ye moot of kynde to manhode enclyne."[2]

1. A.H. Gilbert, 'The Sources of Hoccleve's "Regement of Princes"', Speculum, iii, 1928, pp.93-8.

2. Works, op.cit., p.141, stanza 558.

At various times he managed to make favourable mention of Henry I, duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt and Henry IV. He concluded the poem with stanzas in praise of peace. Women were recommended as peacemakers; if they ruled their husbands, wars would cease. Christian kingdoms such as England and France should not strive against each other but unite against the infidel. The philosophers' laments over the dead Alexander were cited as warnings against lives spent in pursuit of conquest and glory. He hoped that the marriage of Henry to a French princess would end the discord. The envoy declared that only Hoccleve's certainty of the prince's patience gave him courage to present such a plain little book.

Despite the fact that most of the contents of the Regement were derived from Hoccleve's major sources, the work as a whole retained a very individual character. The rambling, autobiographical nature of the Prologue, apart from the conventional encounter with a wise old man and the biblical quotations, was probably entirely his own creation. Indeed, a later poem stated that he suffered some form of nervous breakdown in about 1417, and the state of mind portrayed in the Prologue may well have led to such a misfortune. The main part of the poem, after expressions of loyalty to prince Henry and his house, although following the general pattern of the relevant section of Colonna's De Regimine and using many anecdotes and ideas from the Ludo and Secretum, still showed the author's attitudes and interests. Anecdotes were either dwelt on at length or briefly dismissed according to his inclination.His own prejudices and beliefs frequently emerged: his faith in the good sense of women, dislike of corrupt clergy and anxiety about financial matters. The intended recipient of the work was regularly buttonholed, warned, criticised, flattered and prayed for, normally in the context of present events or of the recent

past.

(ii) The 'Secrees of Old Philisoffres' by John Lydgate

John Lydgate, the Benedictine follower of Chaucer from the monastery of Bury St Edmunds, made a significant contribution to the development of the genre of books of advice for princes in fifteenth century England. The wide popularity his poetry enjoyed amongst his contemporaries, his prolific output and position as court poet ensured that his work would be known to Henry VI and subsequent Yorkist monarchs and would influence later writers such as George Ashby. As early as 1412 prince Henry requested a metrical version of the story of Troy and the result was one of his major poems, the Troy Book.[1] Lydgate used it as a political text book and a 'mirror for princes', at every stage interpreting the story in terms of fifteenth century government, warfare and chivalry and pointing to the lessons to be derived from it.[2] This was also true of two of his other major works, the Siege of Thebes and the Fall of Princes. In the course of his career as a court poet, Lydgate attempted to advise the young Henry VI. Possibly the earliest example of this exists in a manuscript in the British Library.[3] This contains some simple verses, suitable for a young and not particularly intelligent reader. They suggested various heroes and wise men upon whom the king should model himself. This was

1. Lydgate's Troy Book, A.D. 1412-20, ed. H. Bergen with notes by F.J. Furnivall, 4 vols. (London, 1906-35), E.E.T.S., Extra Series, 97, 103, 106, 126.

2. D. Pearsall, 'The English Chaucerians', Chaucer and the Chaucerians, ed. D.S. Brewer (London, 1970), pp. 201-239.

3. London, British Library, MS Harley 2251, ff. 251v-253v.

presumably the first of several such attempts by the clerics and laymen who were in a position to appreciate Henry's needs, to influence him to show wisdom and restraint in his government and to employ suitable counsellors:

> "God send this day unto thy Regalye
> Of al vertues hevenly influence
> Ffirst of alle thi state to magnyfye
> With Salamons sovrayne sapience
> To governe thy wit and thi high prudence
> Liche king David to be loo mercyable
> Whiche of pite whan men dide hym offence
> Mercy preferryng list not be vengeable."[1]

The Siege of Thebes has been identified by R.W. Ayers as making a significant contribution to the English genre of "mirrors for princes".[2] The monastic writer was concerned to stress two main values in the moral he drew from the tragedy of Thebes - the importance of Love and of Truth in the conduct of a prince's affairs. In the process of tracing the downfall of Thebes under Oedipus and Ethiocles he gave his view of the proper power balance within a state. This was presumably a reflection of what he felt to be necessary in fifteenth century English political life. The king should be advised by able, truthful counsellors but, in the end, he had a unique power to decide on the policies to be adopted. The system was grounded on the assumption that he exercised unquestioned dominance over his subjects, forming the stable centre of their social order:

1. Harley 2251, op.cit., transcribed from ff.252r and v.

2. R.W. Ayers, 'Medieval History, Moral Purpose, and the Structure of Lydgate's Siege of Thebes', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, vol.lxxiii, no.5, part I, 1958, pp.463-74.

> "The first seide, aboven alle thyng
> Trothe shulde/longe to a kyng,
> Of his worde/not be variable,
> But pleyn/and hool/as a Centre stable."[1]

This essentially authoritarian conception of the monarchical role, which was soon to be modified in the works of Fortescue, was inherent in the other poems of Lydgate which had some political content. Both Pearsall and Schirmer stress his traditionalist approach to the subject of royal authority.[2] This was particularly noticeable in the Fall of Princes where he suppressed the strictures applied by Boccaccio, his source, to the misrule of tyrants and the justification for their destruction. At one stage he substituted an extract from that most worthy and uncontroversial of political handbooks, John of Salisbury's Policratus:

> "Love and obedience are the forces making for a firmly-established order. It is clear from this that Lydgate's static outlook on politics does not make him a forerunner of the theorists of absolutism in Tudor and Stuart times, but rather indicates he derived his ideas from St Augustine: pax (Lydgate's ideal), ordo (based on the estates of the realm), and

1. Lydgate' Siege of Thebes, ed. A. Erdmann, E.E.T.S., Extra Series, no.cviii, part I, 1911, p.72.

2. D. Pearsall, John Lydgate (London, 1970), pp.249-50. W.F. Schirmer, John Lydgate: a Study in the Culture of the Fifteenth Century, trans. A. Keep (London, 1961), pp. 213-15.

> justitia (the rights and obligations between the ruler and his subjects)."[1]

The problem for the poet and the other court writers was that their prince was not temperamentally suited to wield the great powers with which they believed he should be endowed.

Late in his life Lydgate undertook the translation of the Secretum into English verse, probably unaware that at least two prose versions had already been produced.[2] This version is known as the Secrees of Old Philisoffres for which Steele considered he used either a poor Latin text or a combination of a French and a Latin version.[3] In either case the result has never impressed literary commentators.[4] This is partly explained by the record at line 1491, presumably by the continuator Benedict Burgh: "Here deyed this translator and nobil poete: and the yonge folowere gan his prologe on this wyse."[5] Lydgate's death seems to have occurred in 1449. Burgh lacked his master's stylistic assurance but felt such reverence for his memory that he appears to have assembled uncritically all that remained of the translation. The main components of the Secretum were present but quite out of sequence and the emphasis was changed. For example, Lydgate left only a few

1. Schirmer, op.cit., p.214.

2. Lydgate and Burgh's Secrees of Old Philisoffres, ed. R. Steele (London, 1894), E.E.T.S., Extra Series, Introduction, lxvi.

3. Ibid.,Introduction, p.xv.

4. The following view is fairly typical: "...a wearisome reiteration of rather trite recommendations and moral injunctions." Schirmer, op.cit., p.250.

5. Secrees, op.cit., p.48.

stanzas on topics such as the virtues of stones to which the original devoted considerable space. On the other hand he seized on the compliments paid by Philip to Guy, bishop of Valence, and expanded them quite disproportionately by seventy lines although they had no relevance to his theme.

During the time that he worked on the translation Lydgate was undoubtedly very old and the explanation of why he undertook such a substantial task at that stage in his life must lie in the fact that he enjoyed royal patronage. Like his predecessors Vincent de Beauvais, Egidio Colonna and Jean Gerson he may have been himself playing Aristotle to the king's Alexander. Stanzas 1 to 3 of the prologue (the first of a bewildering series of prologues and prefatory epistles) were a brief programme for the good governance of the realm. The fourth stanza made it quite clear that Lydgate had started the translation at an explicit command, probably given by Henry VI:

> "Ffirst I that am/humble Servitour
> Of the kyng/with hool Affecyoun,
> Voyde of Elloquence/I have do my labour
> To sette in Ordre/and execucyoun
> Ffirst my symplesse/undir Correccioun,
> With ryght hool herte/in al my best entent
> Ffor tacomplysshe/your comaundement."[1]

Benedict Burgh also provided information about his reason for concluding the translation. He was requested to do so either by his patron, Henry, Viscount Bourchier, or by the king himself. In

1. Secrees, op.cit., p.2.

stanza 223 he spoke of the: "... magnificence Royal,/To whom I wryte..."[1] and in stanza 2217 of:

> "...your Comaundement
> In modir tounge/this matere to Combyne,
> Which sauff Support/knowe not the musys nyne."[2]

It is not possible to decide whether he alluded to one or two patrons. In the conclusion he seemed to distance his work from any particular sponsor recommending it to: "alle thoo that/shal the seen or rede."[3]

The service rendered by Lydgate and Burgh was apparently not connected with the growing political unrest in the kingdom. The incapacity of the king, the doubtful succession, the factional strife and the baneful effects on royal prestige of the loss of the last French territories were all factors that contributed to it, but they did not clearly emerge until a few years after the inception of the Secrees. Even the self seeking Hoccleve had allowed himself to comment on contemporary affairs. The explanation of Lydgate's apparent objectivity may lie in his preoccupation with religion and poetry rather than with a political situation that, at his age, he could hardly hope to improve. Significantly the only time when he rose above a rather pedestrian tone was when his text allowed him to discourse on the four seasons.

1. Secrees, op. cit., p.50.
2. Ibid., p.51.
3. Ibid., p.86.

This he did in an authentically Chaucerian vein:

"Entrying[1] this sesoun/wyntir doth leve take,
Ffrostys departyd/and molte with the sonne,
And every ffoul/Chosen hath his make,
And nytyngalys/for Ioye her song hath be gonne;
Yonge Rabettys[2]/be to ther Claperys Ronne,
And the Cokkow/that in Wyntir dare
In every lay to synge/she lyst nat for to spare."[3]

Had the Secrees not been terminated by Lydgate's death and then mangled by Burgh, it might have emerged as an idiosyncratic, fairly attractive metrical version of his original.

(iii) 'The Active Policy of a Prince' and the 'Dicta et Opiniones Diversorum Philosophorum' by George Ashby

Little is known of George Ashby beyond what he revealed himself in A Prisoner's Reflections and the Active Policy of a Prince. The Dicta which starts abruptly and ends in the middle of verse 181 yields nothing at all of a personal nature.[4] The first two poems do, however, give us enough information concerning Ashby's career and political and moral views to provide a sufficient insight into the motivation for his writings. He said in the course of A Prisoner's Reflections[5] that he wrote it in the year 1463. Earlier in the poem

1. Spring.

2. Burrows.

3. Secrees, op.cit., stanza 189, p.42.

4. George Ashby's Poems, ed. M. Bateson, EETS, Extra Series, no. lxxvi, (London, 1899). They occur in a unique manuscript, Cambridge University Library, MS Mm IV 42. Bateson gives a very short introduction and no analysis of the poems. Unless specifically attributed what follows is original work.

5. Ibid., p.11.

he reported that he had been imprisoned in the Fleet by the command of a mighty lord and that:

> "But of all pite and grace forsakyn,
> Myne enemyes on me awakyn,
> Takyng awey hors, money, and goodes,
> Pullyng myne houses downe and gret
> wordes (woodes?)."[1]

He went on to say that he had served the king, the queen and the duke of Gloucester and had worked as clerk of the signet both in England and abroad for forty years, and had gained good fortune and respect for his fidelity. The autobiographical element in the poem has a dramatic function enabling Ashby to contrast his good estate in the past with his present woes. He devoted the remainder of the poem to drawing out the moral: the transitoriness of earthly fortune, the comforts of religion and the Christian virtue of suffering. This literary device allows a fairly convincing picture of his career to be constructed, especially if taken together with verse 61 of the Active Policy of a Prince:

> "And ever remembre olde Sarneyeres
> (servants),
> Hauyng suche personnes in tendernesse
> That hathe be feithfull & trewe
> welewyllers

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.1. Ashby may well have owned other properties as well, but he had certainly taken over the Breakspears estate in Harefield, Middlesex, by 1447 and acquired more land there subsequently. The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Middlesex, ed. S. Reynolds, vol.3 (London, 1962), p.245. Information derived from Middlesex County Record Office, Acc. 312/260.

To thair ligeaunce withoute feintnesse,
Suffryng therfore/grete peine &
butternesse."[1]

The implication is clear: that this faithful but unimportant servant of the Lancastrians remained in England when Henry and Margaret fled; he was probably unwilling to leave his property. Unprotected by pity or grace from the new regime, his enemies threw him into prison. He complained in the poem that his friends deserted him and his lack of influence is indicated by his failure to dedicate the piece to a patron who might rescue him from his confinement.

More may be learnt about Ashby's life from the Active Policy of a Prince[2]; the most arresting fact is his statement in verse 10 that he was nearly eighty years old, a circumstance which explains his description of himself in the Latin dedication as "lately Clerk of the Signet"[3]. He was clearly sure of the favour and indulgence of the royal family since he lectured the prince of Wales in respectful but dogmatic tones on his conduct as king. The character of the poem with its frequent references to insurrection, lawlessness and overmighty lords, as well as the author's great age, make it highly probable that it was written after rather than before A Prisoner's Reflections. This likelihood is increased by the way in which he addressed the Prince, giving advice more appropriate to an adult than to a child. Since there is no hint that the royal family were not in control of England, the date can probably be assigned to 1470, after the Lancastrians had reached an accommodation with

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.26.
2. Ibid., p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 12, "... nuper Clericum Signeti".

Clarence and Warwick, or even early in 1471. Ashby had presumably been released from prison some years before and was living in comfortable retirement when he suddenly saw the opportunity of offering the dynasty to which he was still loyal some timely advice. His age or his lack of importance saved him from the penalties of supporting the losing side yet again, for he seems to have been settled in his property at Harefield, Middlesex, when he died in February 1474/5.[1] References to Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou in the Active Policy were ambiguous. In stanza 14 he wrote as if their reign had ended:

> "...of oure liege lorde/Kynge Henry and dame (?)
> Margarete, the Quene/bothe in Charitee
> Ever though grete was their maiestie (?)
> Yit they eschewed/vengeance and Rigoure,
> Shewynge their benevolence and favour."[2]

On the other hand, in stanza 28 he prayed: "The high estate of oure king god preserve."[3] The first part of the poem is peppered with rather oblique allusions to treachery, covetousness and falsehood and it may be assumed that the Yorkists were the intended target of these strictures. No attempt was made, however, to link the political advice to specific circumstances and the strengths and weaknesses of past English monarchs were referred to in the most general of terms. This keeps open the possibility that the Active Policy was written rather earlier than suggested above and that, when he died in 1474, Ashby was very old indeed. The explanation

1. The Dictionary of National Biography, ed. L. Stephen (London, 1885), vol.II, pp.164-5.

2. Bateson, op.cit., p.16.

3. Ibid., p.19.

for Ashby's disinclination to engage in specific political propaganda may lie in his extreme old age and preference for the wisdom of the ancients. In this his work may be compared with Lydgate's translation of the Secretum, also undertaken in troublesome times when the writer was very old. There can be no suspicion that Ashby was simply being cautious; the very assumption that Henry VI was king and prince Edward was his heir would have been treasonable from the Yorkist point of view.

Ashby made a clear statement of his motives for undertaking the work in a Latin prose introduction which precedes the verse proem to the Active Policy of a Prince.[1] He declared his loyalty and gratitude to king Henry, queen Margaret and the prince of Wales in whose service he had been sustained from his youth. The poem was to be divided into three parts: the past which would call to mind matters derived from holy scripture, chronicles and "other speculations and experiences". These should provide a foundation for good deeds and wise conduct and for avoiding danger from evil doers. The present would show how the prince might display wisdom and policy pleasing to God and his subjects in such a way that his own safety might be ensured. The future would provide discreet and prudent advice as to how he could achieve an honourable reputation through good government and avoid hateful calumny and other dangers. This would be derived from the wise maxims and opinions of various philosophers. His original intention seems to have been to provide little more than a metrical translation of the Dicta et Opiniones Diversorum Philosophorum which was the title he gave to the work more generally known as the Liber de dictis philosophorum, antiquorum.

1. Bateson, op.cit., pp.12-13.

The way in which Ashby divided his poem into Past, Present and Future was almost certainly derived from Cicero.[1] The original passage in the De Inventione runs:

> "Nam virtus est animi habitus naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus ... Habet igitur partes quattuor: prudentiam, justitiam, fortitudinem, temperantiam. Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malarum neutrarumque scientia. Partes eius: memoria, intellegentia, providentia. Memoria est per quam animus repetit illa quae fuerunt; intellegentia per quam ea perspicit, quae sunt; providentia, per quam futurum aliquid videtur ante quam factum est."[2]

The Latin introduction of Ashby did not quote the words of Cicero; they were probably more closely based on an intermediary such as

1. W. Kleineke, Englische Fürstenspiegel vom Policraticus Johanns von Salisbury bis zum Basilikon Doron König Jacobs I, Studien zur Englischen Philologie, Hft. 90 (Halle, 1937), p.141. He comes to the same conclusion.

2. M. Tulli Ciceronis, Rhetorici Libri Duo qui vocantur De Inventione, ed. and trans. H. Bornecque, Lib.II, no.LIII (Paris, 1932), p.256. "Virtue is a condition of the soul conforming to Nature and Reason ... It has four parts: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. Prudence is the recognition of what is good, what is bad and that which is neither. Its parts are memory, intelligence and foresight. Memory enables the mind to remember past events, intelligence involves a good judgment concerning present events, foresight involves the anticipation of future events before they happen."

as Victorinus,[1] Albertus Magnus, St Thomas Aquinas or one of the other schoolmen who adopted this description of the cardinal virtue of Prudence.[2] Yet Ashby was clearly adhering to the original scheme in the way in which he presented his programme:

> "Tempus preteritum exortatur, sepius meminire de rebus preteritis ... Tempus presens facit quomodo se gerriet (sic) in sapiencia et pollecia ... Tempus futurum providet discrete & prudenter pro rebus futuris..."[3]

It is typical of the pragmatic, unscholarly approach of Ashby that he did not shed the lustre of Cicero over his poem by attributing his scheme to him.[4] He was possibly unaware of his ultimate source.

1. M. Fabii Victorini Rhetoris Doctissimi Commentarii in Rhetoricos M. Tulli Ciceronis, (Paris, 1537),p.180.

2. E. Wind, The Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance (London, 1968), p.45 n.i.

3. Bateson, op.cit., pp.12-13. "Time Past indicates that things which have happened should be held in the memory. Present Time shows how one should conduct oneself in wisdom and policy. The Future Time provides for discretion and prudence in the future."

4. Ashby may have taken the idea from Chaucer. I am grateful to Professor Scattergood for drawing my attention to lines 744-49 of book 5 of 'Troilus and Criseyde'. Criseyde speaks:
"Prudence, allas, oon of thyne eyen thre
Me lakked alwey, er that I come here!
On tyme ypassed wel remembred me,
And present tyme ek koud ich wel ise,
But future tyme, er I was in the snare,
Koude I nat sen; that causeth now my care."
The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson (London, 1957), p.467.

The verse proem commenced with an invocation of Gower, Chaucer and Lydgate followed by the formula in which the author proclaimed his own ignorance and unworthiness in comparison with such great poets. The proem and the remainder of the poem is in rhyme royal, although stanza 42 has eight lines. Support for the theory that he intended to provide little more than a straightforward translation of the Dicta is provided by stanzas 5 and 6:

> "...I may confourme me aftur the report
> Of vertuous / and sad construccion,
> Without minisshyng or addicion,
> Principally in thentent and substance
> Of myh matere, with all the observance.
>
> 6
>
> And thaugh all thynges be nat made perfyte
> Nor swetely englissed to youre plesance,
> I byseche you hertely / to excuse it,
> So that I kepe intential substance..."[1]

He went on to state that he had not seen many books, particularly commentaries, so intended to keep strictly to his theme in the hope that he would not cause offence. He was very old but he hoped that his work would be sensible and would promote the will of God. He then addressed prince Edward directly. After a prayer for his parents, he explained the purpose of his poem about past, present and future policy and provided, incidentally, valuable if biased evidence about the prince's education:

> 16
>
> "My goode Lorde, trewe hertly affection
> Compellithe me somewhat to extremete,

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.14.

In fyndyng sum goode exhortacion
That myght be to you/gracious and mete,
Ensuryng youre estate in quiete sete,
Whiche may never endure but by vertue,
According to the pleasance of Iesu.

And so youre bringyng up[17] hath be right sad,
In all vertuous disposicion
And to the honour of god/ever ladde..."[1]

Ashby's warning that he had enjoyed little access to books as he wrote was borne out by the first part of the poem which dealt with the past (In tempore preterito). The holy scripture and chronicles to which he had referred in the Latin introduction were only invoked in the most general terms. Indeed one of the features which distinguishes the Active Policy from other such treatises is the absolute dearth of anecdotes. Not only did Ashby resist any temptation to rehearse the glorious deeds of Edward III or Henry V, he also ignored the quite extensive narrative sequences concerning the lives of Alexander, Socrates and other ancients which were available in his own source book. No reference to the Liber Philosophorum, on which the proem had implied the poem was to be based, may be discerned in part I. The reason soon becomes apparent, for the old royal servant was anxious above all to press on his young prince the lesson of forty years' observation of the operation of Lancastrian government. The wise ancients, the holy scriptures, even the chronicles were useless for this particular purpose. "Experiencias" was the source of the seven stanzas which followed

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.16.

five opening ones paying conventional respect to the Christian virtues of a prince. Ashby called the reader's attention to his advice with a solemn warning:

> "Ther was never yet fal/of high estate,
> But it was for vices/or negligence,
> Were he never so high/or elevate,
> Withoute he wolde attende wele by prudence
> To his charge, avoidyng from his presence,
> Men vicious, and namely covetous;
> Where thei abide thei distroy every hous."[1]

There are layers of meaning to be uncovered here. Certainly the reader would be expected to identify the Yorkists as the "men vicious" who by their covetousness had brought disaster to the kingdom. But a royal official such as Ashby, who showed such a clear grasp of political reality, would be well aware that the Lancastrians' troubles predated the dynastic conflict. They had started in 1450 with the reaction to the rapacity and inefficiency of the clique led first by the duke of Suffolk and later by the duke of Somerset.[2] Ashby had, after all, served one of its victims, Humphrey of Gloucester. By implication, his strictures did not even stop at the royal favourites, for the real culprit responsible for the Lancastrians' "fal/of high estate" by his

1. Bateson, op.cit., stanza 24, p.18.

2. Bateson takes stanza 26, p.18, to refer to the death of Richard of York in 1460, but Ashby made it clear here and in other verses that he was censuring covetousness for money and goods rather than power. York, incidentally, actually lost money through his service to the Crown, Griffiths, op.cit., pp.754, 799.

negligence and lack of prudence was king Henry himself. By 1470 he was a witless puppet; the leadership of his party had long since devolved for all practical purposes on his wife, whom Ashby had served. The disinterested and frank nature of the advice is a testimony to the strength of his loyalty; even if the Lancastrians had retained the throne in 1471, it is unlikely that such an aged and obscure man would have received much material reward.

The next few stanzas deplored the great tribulations that had occurred as a result of the covetousness of some people. The sentiment which emerged was not, primarily hatred and resentment against those people but frustration that the government had allowed them to threaten the safety of the state. Having drawn on his own experience to offer some excellent advice, Ashby piously brought part I to a conclusion by imputing it to the chronicles and scriptures which he had so sedulously ignored:

> "Who that herith many Cronicles olde,
> And redithe other blessid Scripture,
> Shall excede al other bi manyfolde
> Resons, and his discrecions ful sure
> Circumspect in his actes, wytt pure,
> And so to guyde hym in siche cases lyke
> As other men dudde that were polletike."[1]

The second part, which was concerned with the present (De tempore presenti), started again with a direct address to prince Edward. He had been brought forth by God to rule at the present time. He should right wrongs with lawful moderation, suppress rebellion and take the opportunity to rule with wisdom and

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.19, stanza 30.

discretion. Stanza 34 is of great interest for the frankness with which it laid out the prince's chances of becoming a good or bad monarch. It also showed a preoccupation with the account left to posterity which was more typical of Renaissance Italy than fifteenth century England:

> "Suche as ye be, so shall ye be taken,
> Youre dedys & werkes shal prove al thing,
> Wele or evyl thei shalbe awaken,
> In cronicles youre Rule rehersyng,
> Either in preisyng either in blamyng.
> Nowe here ye may chese wherto ye wol drawe,
> Best is to confourme you/to goodys lawe."[1]

The remainder of this part seems much more like a conventional mirror for a prince. The virtues of moderation, justice, good order and decisiveness were praised. Stress was placed on the importance of choosing good servants, keeping within his income, supervising the government in person and taking sound advice. Some of these ideas, particularly the one about living on his own, were probably derived from experience; the rest, however, were to be found in the traditional books of advice originating from the Secretum and culminating in Egidio's De Regimine Principum. Ashby's increasing reliance on recognised authority was illustrated by the fact that three of his verses were preceded by texts from the Liber - Plato, Pictagoras and Hermes. On the whole, this section works quite well. The initial eloquent address to Edward imparted a sense of urgency to the whole and the mixture of personal and public virtues and conduct that were recommended to him were intrinsically

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.20.

sensible and practical.

The contents of the final part, treating of the future (De tempore Futuro), continued the pragmatic approach which characterises the earlier sections. Five more quotations were taken from the Liber - Socrates, Hermes, Gregory, Pictagoras and Homer and one reference was made to the epistle of St Peter.[1] Conventional respect was paid to Christian standards of conduct, but the main theme was the requirement for a successful contemporary English sovereign.

As in the first and second sections, Ashby started by offering advice which seemed to be based very specifically on the political circumstances of the time and to be drawn from his long experience of government. The prince was urged to take measures to suppress conspiracy and the threat of rebellion. He was particularly warned against those of great power and position who might hold rival claims to the throne:

> "...Ye must subdewe with al suppressyng
> Every persoune withoute submission
> Pretendyng right to your coronacion."[2]

In the next stanza, one of the most personal in the whole poem, Ashby compared the fate of old servants who might suffer unrewarded with the fortune of former rebels who were pardoned with little justification. He went on to emphasise that care should be taken in the selection of servants, especially that they should be of good character.

At this stage in the poem Ashby, possibly through age or

1. I.ii.18, Bateson, op.cit., stanza 129, p.41.
2. Ibid., stanza 60, p.26.

fatigue, seemed to have lost control of his theme, for the advice which followed was almost incoherent and arbitrary transitions were made from one subject to another. No reference had yet been made to any authority other than the Liber and the Bible for what he had written but, at this stage, it is clear that he was drawing on common proverbs and sayings as well as his own ideas.[1] The wisdom of the ancients gave place to an amorphous collection of aphorisms which were mingled with opinions of a very practical nature relevant to contemporary political and economic needs. The prince was advised to buy goods whilst they were cheap, ensure that the commons were prosperous and thus stable, uphold the law, revive cloth making but prevent the poor from dressing above their station. The practicalities of fifteenth century kingship were further illustrated by warnings against allowing the commons to bear arms or the gentry to indulge in livery or maintenance. Despite his strictures against weapons in the hands of commoners, Ashby favoured the practice of archery in every town. His mood then changed and, whilst emphasising the need for just rule, he devoted two stanzas to the praise of God to whom all earthly kings must answer.

The pious interlude was terminated by a return to practicalities such as the need to reward those who had given good service and to be sceptical about tales told against individuals. Ashby's experience of the earlier part of the reign of Henry VI clearly influenced his warning against making subjects too rich and powerful:

> "... to youre richesse make never man liche,
> If ye wol stande in peas and be set by."[2]

1. C.F. Buhler, 'The "Liber de Dictis Philosophorum Antiquorum" and Common Proverbs in George Ashby's Poems,' Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, vol lxv, 1950, pp.282-9.

2. Bateson, op.cit., stanza 92, p.33.

The events of the previous decades did not, however, bear out his opinion concerning the effectiveness of a well educated prince:

> "...Who that is lettred suffician(t)ly,
> Rulethe meche withoute swerde obeiceantly."[1]

Advice about impartial lawgiving, holding regular audiences for the people and not going to war without good reason was much more realistic. The following stanza struck a general moral note by means of seven aphorisms concerning good government. Since it is practically identical with a stanza in the anonymous contemporary poem, the Court of Sapience, it will be necessary to consider it further below.

The first of the five quotations from the Liber prefaced the next part of the 'De tempore Futuro'. Several stanzas were devoted to the question of making wise decisions through careful discussion in the royal council. The high moral tone was, however, rather impaired by the lively condemnation of the resumption grants which followed. This was almost certainly a reflection of a personal experience of Ashby who probably suffered in the early 1450s when, weakened by popular unrest, the Crown was forced by parliament to resume some of the grants it had made to courtiers. Ashby did not seem to recognise that he was breaking the spirit of his advice in the first part that the prince should discourage covetous followers and in the earlier stanza of part III that he should not enrich his subjects disproportionately. The need for keeping good order in the realm was next discussed; some who offended the prince might be shown mercy but others, engaged in subversion, should be punished.

1. Bateson, op.cit., stanza 93.

Ashby then returned to the subject of those who served the king, obviously one of his major preoccupations. The Treasurer should not be a lord as a humbler person would work for lower rewards. The Council should be composed of elderly, sober men of honest character. Where good advice was not available the prince should commit himself to God's direction. Again an echo from the reign of Henry VI might have informed the advice next offered:

> "...Therfore in iche thing at the
> begynnyng,
> Studie sadly by goode discrecion
> How ye may take a goode direccion."[1]

A king's countenance should always be equable, not showing any guile or anger and he should not give too much importance to music or rhetoric. The first could lead to frivolity, the second to flattery and falsehood. Temperance and gentleness were the other qualities a prince should cultivate. Most of this part, which concentrated on the personal qualities of a prince, is reminiscent of Egidio Colonna's first book of the De Regimine Principum. The resemblance is too general to make it probable that any deliberate borrowing took place but if, as is likely, Ashby had read the work, this part of the poem betrays its influence. Stanza 125 gave a very Lancastrian assessment of the common people. Throughout the previous two decades, it had been the Yorkists who had attempted to make propaganda appeals to the people:[2]

1. Bateson, op.cit., stanza 120, p.39.
2. Griffiths, op.cit., p.693.

"Put no ful truste in the Comonalte,
Thai be ever wavering in variance,
But in god feithfulnesses and equite,
In plaine trouthe, Iustice & goode
governaunce..."[1]

The last five stanzas of the poem offered conventional good wishes to the prince in the form of a prayer. The penultimate stanza may offer unwitting testimony to the kind of indulgent religious attitudes which, in the days of the pious Henry VI, had passed for politic government:

"Whan al lawe, Reason and discrecion,
Wisdam, prudence, counseil & secretnesse
Faile & dispeire/in ymaginacion,
Than ther may be noon other stabilnesse.
But trustyng to god & his feithfulnesse
There is verrey relief and good seurte.
Sith it is so, lete us to hym trewe be."[2]

In the first three lines, Ashby denied all the virtues of good government that he had promoted in the body of the poem. In so doing he ultimately showed himself to be a shrewd clerk who could unconsciously slip into cliche, rather than a farsighted statesman.

In the course of preparing this section it was noticed that the first four lines of the final stanza are practically identical with stanza 3 of a seven verse poem on the virtues required by a prince.

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.40. See also the Somnium Vigilantis, J.P. Gilson, 'A Defence of the Proscription of the Yorkists in 1459', English Historical Review, 1911, pp.512-25.

2. Bateson, op.cit., stanza 130, p.41.

They go as follows: 1) Prudence, 2) Justice, 3) Temperance, 4) Discretion, 5) Reason, 6) Pleasance and Goodwill, 7) Courtesy and Nurture. The four lines which occur in Ashby under Temperance are :

> "Thinges past, remembre & wele devide;
> Thinges present, considre & wele governe;
> For thinges commyng, prudently provide;
> Al thinges in his tyme peise & discerne..."[1]

The final lines of Ashby's stanza have a different sentiment from the original simply exhorting the prince to virtue whilst the third stanza on Temperance urged on him impartiality in judging disputes. There is even less doubt than in the case of stanza 99 that Ashby was the plagiarist. The seven stanzas on the virtues have been identified by Hammond as appearing in six manuscripts.[2] In all cases they also contain works by Lydgate and in three, Harley 2251, Harley 116 and Arundel 168, they occur next to Benedict Burgh's translations of the Major and Minor Morals of Cato. In the case of Harley 2251 they come immediately after the Summum Sapientiae written in the same hand and dedicated by Lydgate in an envoy to a queen who was almost certainly Margaret of Anjou. Since Lydgate

1. Bateson, op.cit., stanza 131.

2. E.P. Hammond, 'Two British Museum Manuscripts. A Contribution to the Bibliography of John Lydgate', Anglia, vol.XXVIII, 1905, pp.1-28, p.22, no.60. They are British Library MSS Harley 2251, f.168r, Harley 4733, Harley 116, f.124r, Arundel 168, f.14r, Oxford, Bodleian MS Ashmole 59, f.70v and Cambridge University Library Ff I 6. The whole stanza has been transcribed from Harley 116:
   "Temperancia
   Thynge past remember and wele devide
   Thynge present considere & wele govene
   Ffor thynge commynge prudently provide
   Peise matiers or thou dome or disterne
   Lat ryght in cause holde the lanterne
   Bytwene frendys & soon stonde even & egall
   And for no mede be not parciall."

died in about 1449 and Henry married Margaret in 1445, the work must predate the composition of the Active Policy by at least twenty years. Corroborative evidence is provided by the fact that MS Harley 2251 belongs to a group of manuscripts associated with a workshop which produced copies of books for the bibliophile John Shirley.[1] As he died in 1456 and this manuscript is roughly contemporary with some of his volumes, the work must date from the mid fifteenth century or earlier and was probably by Lydgate or Burgh. The way in which Ashby utilised the lines and the stanza from the Court of Sapience recalls one of the techniques of Lydgate who undoubtedly exercised a strong influence over him and with whom he must have been personally acquainted. As Pearsall wrote:

> "Lydgate often wrote poems as commentaries on other poems, or embedded their fragments in his own new fabrics, as if the materials of poetry were like old bricks (as in some sense they are), that could be used over and over again."[2]

Ashby clearly had knowledge not only of the seven stanza poem on the virtues, but of a number of other works which regularly occurred in the manuscripts mentioned above. He may have had access to the Summum Sapientiae, of which his mistress may well have had a presentation copy, and the Morals of Cato. Despite his protestation that he used a few books in the Active Policy, he had at least committed one whole stanza (99) and four lines (131) to memory. He may possibly have made more such borrowings that have not as yet been identified. Moreover the scheme of the Summum and the Morals, a Latin precept followed by its expansion into an English verse, is so close to the otherwise unprecedented Liber translation that it can hardly be coincidental. If it is recalled that the Summum was

1. E. P. Hammond, 'Ashmole 59 and other Shirley Manuscripts', Anglia, vol.XXX, 1907, pp.320-348.

2. Pearsall, op.cit., p.210.

almost certainly translated for the mother of prince Edward and that the Morals were intended for the use of teachers of grammar in class, the didactic intent of both the Active Policy and the Dicta, which were both produced for his benefit, is further emphasised.

It remains to discuss how far Ashby's Active Policy may be described as an original work rather than as a paraphrase or redaction of part of the Liber Philosophorum so that its usefulness can be assessed in relation to the extent it represented new advice rather than well known sayings. The description of the contents of the contents of the poem given above should have indicated that the work was in great measure entirely original. The Latin introduction, the English proem and the early stanzas of each of the three parts were direct addresses to prince Edward and his parents in which, apart from conventional humility formulae and prayers, Ashby analysed the problems of ruling England in the fifteenth century. In other parts of the poem, especially where he prefaced a stanza with a quotation from the Liber, it might appear that he was being derivative. Most of these verses in fact dealt with the specific needs of the English monarchy rather than reiterating the sentiments of conventional books of advice. The only parts where the latter seems to have been the case have been noticed above. The limitation on the sources on which he could draw was, doubtless, one of the factors which promoted his originality. He may, of course, have used material to which he gave no recognition and one example has already been discussed. The other source raises several issues about the poem and Ashby's status as an author, so it must be considered at some length.

Stanza 99 in part III reads:

"Wo worthe debate that never may have peas.
Wo worthe penance that askithe no pite.

Wo worthe vengence that mercy may nat sease.
Wo worthe that Iugement that hathe none equite.
Wo worthe that trouthe that hath-e no charite.
Wo worthe that Iuge that wol no gilte save.
Wo worthe that right that may no favour have."[1]

This was a well known literary form in the later middle ages as Buhler pointed out in his monograph on the Court of Sapience.[2] It was employed by the author of Piers Plowman and by Gower in his Confessio Amantis and, in the reign of Henry VII, by Stephen Hawes in the Pastime of Pleasure. The stanza quoted above occurred in almost exactly the same form in two contemporary contexts other than the Active Policy. One is printed by Furnivall and appeared as a single stanza in a manuscript which also contained two other short contemporary moral verses besides longer poems by Chaucer and Lydgate.[3] The other was stanza 67 in the long poem often attributed to Lydgate called the Court of Sapience.[4] This work was apparently

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.34.

2. C.F. Buhler, 'The Sources of the "Court of Sapience"', Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie (Leipzig, 1932), Heft XXII, pp.9-95, p.87.

3. F.J. Furnivall, 'Mr Hy. Huth paper MS of Chaucer and Lydgate fragments, etc., about 1460-70 A.D.', Notes and Queries, 5th Series, vol.IX, 1878. pp. 342-3. This manuscript now forms part of the Huntington Library, California, MS 144.

4. For the text see, '"The Court of Sapience", Spät-Mittelenglisches Allegorisch-Didaktisches Visions-gedicht', ed. R. Spindler, Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie, VI (Leipzig, 1927), pp.7-268 and E.R. Harvey, The Court of Sapience, Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations, no. 2 (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1984). Both Spindler and Harvey rejected Lydgate as the author on literary grounds. The former, unconvincingly, wished to confine the date to the second reign of Edward IV. Harvey simply locates it in the middle third of the century.

popular in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century since, although only four manuscripts survive,[1] it was printed by both William Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde. The first part of the poem is a dream allegory, closely modelled on Deguileville's Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine in which the fate of mankind was decided by a debate conducted before God the Father by his four daughters, the virtues. The timely intervention of Jesus Christ saved mankind from certain damnation. The second part of the poem recounted how the author, still in a dream, was conducted by Sapience round her castle in which he encountered the Seven Liberal Arts and their handmaids and, finally, the greatest of all branches of knowledge, Theology.

The problem to be resolved is that of the relationship between the stanza in Ashby's Active Policy, the practically identical stanza in the Court of Sapience and the isolated verse in Huntington MS 144. If the Court of Sapience was indeed by Lydgate the matter is straightforward, for Ashby simply adapted this eminently quotable stanza for inclusion in his poem at an appropriate stage. Indepently a scribe chose to add the rather arresting sentiments voiced in the verse to the Lydgatian lines at the end of the Huntington manuscript.[2] If Lydgate was not the author, two other possibilities remain: either Ashby took the verse from the Court, the Huntington manuscript or some other source, or he composed it himself. The latter theory was tentatively considered by Buhler in

1. British Library, MS Harley 2251, Additional MS 29729, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R3/21 and Columbia University Library, Plimpton MS 256 (P).
2. The indefatigable Buhler in yet another article gave a graphic illustration of how Lydgatian stanzas could appear in various contexts in the later fifteenth century. C.F. Buhler, 'Lydgate's "Horse, Sheep and Goose" and Huntington MS HM 144', Modern Language Notes, 1940, vol.LV, pp.563-69.

his monograph on the Court:

> "... In the study of the sources of this poem, I do not intend to discuss the question of authorship, but I wish to draw the attention of some literary investigator to the possibility that the poem was the work of George Ashby."[1]

Were Buhler's assumption to be correct, the whole nature of Ashby's literary output would appear in a different light. In addition to the two partly moral, partly autobiographical poems in racy vernacular style and the one moralised translation that currently constitute the corpus of his works, we would have to reckon with the Court. This is a formal, allegorical work which used a number of authorities such as Bonaventura, the Catholicon of Balbus, Deguileville, Bartholomeus Anglicus and other encyclopaedists quite extensively and made absolutely no reference to contemporary politics. While shunning the role of "literary investigator" envisaged by Buhler, I would suggest that from the nature of the sources used and the preoccupation shown with religion throughout, a cleric rather than a layman was likely to have been the author. The style is more sophisticated than anything of which Ashby was capable, even at the end of his career.[2] Finally, the fact that no manuscript or printed version survives dating from before 1460 does not automatically exclude Lydgate's candidacy for authorship. His

1. Buhler, 'Court of Sapience', op.cit., p.17. In a footnote he states, "I have not had the time to examine the two works from the point of view of language or metrical similarities."

2. Harvey, op.cit., Introduction, p.xxiv, corroborates the view that Ashby was not the author on grounds of style and content.

popularity endured for the rest of the century and many copies were made of his poems. The hypothesis is suggested that Ashby took stanza 99 from an unidentified source, probably thinking that he was paying tribute to his royal master's former poet laureate in so doing.

Yet more remains to be said of the Court of Sapience, if only to justify its exclusion from detailed consideration in this chapter. Painter is of the opinion that it was dedicated to Edward IV and that the four daughters and son of God in part I referred to his children.[1] Blades thought that it might have been intended for Henry V.[2] If this long and elaborate poem had been destined for a royal patron, it should surely be given more space here. Although the first half was little more than a conventional allegorical religious poem, the second contained an educational programme that would stand comparison with (and indeed was almost certainly influenced by) book VII of Gower's Confessio Amantis.

It is questionable, however, whether the author of the Court of Sapience ever intended to make a dedication to a specific individual, royal or common. The stanzas on which the assumption of a royal dedication is based read as follows:

> "...Meke herte, good tonge, and spryte
> pacyent
> Who hath these thre, my book I hym
> present!
>
> 10
>
> And as hym lyst, lete hym detray or adde;

1. G. Painter, William Caxton, (London, 1976), p.119.
2. W. Blades, The Life and Typography of William Caxton, 2 vols, (London, 1863) vol. 2, p.115.

> For syth I am constreyned for to wryte
> By my souerayne, and have a mater glad,
> And can not please, paynte, enourne ne endyte,
> Late ignoraunce and chyldhode have the wyte!"[1]

Apart from the fact that the anonymous author said that he presented his work to anyone with a meek heart, a charitable tongue and a patient spirit, it is by no means clear that he meant his king when he referred to his "souerayne". Since royal dedications were invariably intended to gain favour for the author, this curt, ungracious fashion of introducing such a patron would surely have been unproductive. He might well have intended his reader to understand that "souerayne" was synonymous with either God or Sapience in this context. Given these factors, the theory that the Court of Sapience was intended to advise a particular prince rather than the educated generality of readers is exceedingly tenuous.

Had the Lancastrians succeeded in their attempt to retain the throne in 1470-1, the Active Policy for a Prince should have proved a useful handbook for Edward. Years of exile and the domination of his affairs by his strong mother have obscured his nature from posterity and it is hard to judge whether he would have proved amenable to good advice. Certainly Ashby's claim that he had enjoyed a good education would seem to be justified despite the unpromising circumstances of his upbringing.[2] Indeed there was

1. Spindler, op.cit., p.126.
2. See below, chap. 5.

nothing in this rather homely poem that should have proved inaccessible to a person of even a rudimentary level of literacy. It may be said to belong to the corpus of works which were produced in the fourteenth and fifteenth century specifically for the increasing numbers of the laity who could read and write and who required some superficial knowledge of the wisdom of the ancients. Christine de Pisan's Epistle of Othea best typifies the genre although, in some respects, Ashby deviated from the normal pattern of such compendia.

It will be suggested below that Ashby set out to present prince Edward with an English verse translation of the Liber Philosophorum. When it became apparent to him that he had not used nearly as much of the work as he had intended in the Active Policy of a Prince, he tacked on a partial, disordered verse translation of the Liber as a collection of moralised "pièces justicatives" to his own largely original poem. His great age and, presumably, the urgency of the events to which his poem was a response may furnish a partial explanation for the inconsistencies and contradictions that appeared in it. There must remain, however, the impression that Ashby did not follow his own advice and consider projects carefully before he undertook them. He was also incapable of sustaining a coherent argument for very long or of ensuring that each point to be made was compatible with those that preceded it. He apparently deviated from his original intention to produce a version of the Liber when his own long experience of the pitfalls of government impelled him to give advice relevant to contemporary politics. Unlike Sir John Fortescue, however, he lacked the intellectual stamina and academic skill to adhere to the coherent scheme he had designed. Yet the learned William Worcester, if he was the author of the Boke of Noblesse, was to prove incapable even of making such a design.

The Active Policy of a Prince may be described as a political poem with an original plan, divided into past, present and future. Appropriately the future was accorded far more space than the past or the present.[1] Each part commenced with an invocation to the recipient of the poem, prince Edward, in which he was urged to foster the qualities to be described in the following verses. Much of the advice which followed was of a useful and highly relevant nature, couched in a plain style that could have made few demands on the comprehension of the prince. The impact was somewhat diminished, however, by the confused method of presentation. Ashby was capable of cramming an amazing number of ideas into a small space. From stanza 71 to 83, for example, he gave approximately twenty different pieces of advice.[2] Yet he did manage to sustain one theme throughout the poem: the need to maintain an ordered society and strictly to subordinate the people to the law.

At the beginning in the Latin introduction and at the end of the sections on the past and future, Ashby made a conscious attempt to remind the reader of his theme and to demonstrate how it would develop. Although the structure may be criticised and will not bear comparison with the fine scholastic edifices of writers such as Egidio Colonna, he was at least aware of the need to give some purpose and shape to his work. His failure to be consistent was, however, much more serious in a writer with pretensions to offer a science of politics. Various contradictions have been noticed above, particularly the penultimate stanza of the poem where he seemed to abdicate all responsibility for sustained thought or activity. Perhaps this was not surprising in a royal servant used

1. Thirteen stanzas for the past, twenty two for the present and seventy six for the future.
2. Bateson, op.cit., pp.28-31.

to a lifetime of subordination and the impotent observation of the follies of his betters.

The usefulness of the Active Policy of a Prince is self evident. The need for the Dicta et Opiniones Diversorum Philosophorum is less clear, unless it is to be regarded as a sort of appendix to the former work. The first line of the Active Policy reads: "Presens Libellus compilatus, extractus et anglicatus in Balade per Georgium Ashby." This would lead us to expect little originality, a translated compilation of the Liber Philosophorum, put together very selectively and cast in verse rather than prose. What we in fact get is a largely original treatise on princely government, interpolated with autobiographical material and eight Latin quotations, seven of them identifiable as coming from the Liber Philosophorum. Presumably Ashby set out to assist his young master by offering a conventional compendium of advice concerning good princely conduct taken from the well known authority of the Liber. Yet, like Hoccleve when he tried to do the same thing with Egidio, Cessolis and the Secretum, his own experience and the pressing political demands of the time kept forcing him into originality with the result that the poem does not at all resemble the work promised in the Latin preamble. None of the Latin quotations in the Active Policy are repeated in the Dicta which follows. Probably Cambridge University Library MS Mm IV 42 is the only manuscript of the two poems that was ever made. It is reasonably certain that the Dicta is the later work as it starts half way down on the page on which the Active Policy finishes.[1] The writing of the second work differs in size and colour if not in style from that of the Active Policy, implying that some time elapsed between the completion of the first

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and the initiation of the second poem. Ashby had used the Latin Liber as a source of authoritative texts on which to base some but by no means all of his English verses, but the first poem owes nothing to the Liber in style, structure or approach. The rambling, generalised nature of the Liber has been described above; the Active Policy is a pragmatic piece of advice offered to a young prince apparently about to take power in the England of the later fifteenth century.

It possibly occurred to Ashby as he surveyed his handiwork that he had not really accomplished what he had set out to do. This may have been the motive that led him to tack on the Dicta Philosophorum as a sequel or appendix to the Active Policy. He had revealed himself through his two English poems as a man of conventional morality, limited reading[1] and sound common sense, with a clear perception of political reality. He presumably believed that the handbook for his prince would be given more weight and authority were he to attach a compendium of personal morality, taken almost entirely from the Liber. The resulting work is not a success from any point of view. Whilst it must be accepted that the author believed that he could only hold his master's attention if he presented the work in the form of short Latin quotations which were then enlarged upon in English verses, this extension of the approach of the previous poem fails miserably.

In the first place, the Dicta cannot possibly be described as

1. Active Policy verse 8, p.14:
"Right so though I have not seien scripture
Of many bookes right sentenciall,
In especial of the gloses sure,
I woll therfor kepe true menyng formal,
Nor right meche delatyng the rehersall."

a version, even an abbreviation, of the Liber Philosophorum.[1] Several of the philosophers who occur in the original are omitted entirely, namely Sedechias, Tac, Saquannin, Rabion and St Gregory, as well as all those who are given brief mention in the last section of the Liber and all the episodes which relate to Alexander the Great. Furthermore, the order in which the wise sayings are given bears absolutely no relationship to that employed in the Liber as Appendix 2 will make clear. Finally, apart from the omission of whole sections of the original plus substantial portions of the sayings of the philosophers who are referred to in the Dicta, Ashby also made a number of erroneous attributions. Out of one hundred and eighty three Latin quotations which are assigned to specific philosophers, Buhler[2] has observed that hundred and fifty are correct according to Franceschini's edition of the Liber while the remaining thirty three were wrongly attributed.[3]

If Ashby's Dicta does not give a clear idea of the original from which it was taken neither does it constitute a satisfactory or worthwhile piece of literature in its own right.[4] The original

1. Buhler described it as a "paraphrase", Dicts ed., op.cit., Introduction p.xx.

2. 'The Liber ... and Common Proverbs', op.cit.

3. Twelve of the quotations attributed to Hermes belong to Sedechias. It is quite possible that Ashby was working from an incomplete manuscript which lacked the first page. As Sedechias is the first philosopher in the standard (Franceschini) version of the Liber and is followed by Hermes, the mistake he made in the case of the twelve quotations might be explained by the faults in his text rather than by carelessness.

4. Scattergood, Politics and Poetry, op.cit., p.285, has concluded: "The 'dicta' are usually treated as a separate item, but they seem to the present writer to have been conceived as part of the advice Ashby intended to give."

Latin and French texts can hardly pretend to be high quality prose; the style is repetitive and pedestrian, the structure scarcely discernible. The Ashby version has all these faults and compounds them by lacking even the rudimentary plan of the original sayings which are grouped by particular philosophers who are allocated to a vaguely chronological order. The Latin part of the piece is mostly faithful quotation from the original; the English verses are sub-Chaucerian jingles simply constructed to convey the sense of the Latin sayings in rhyme royal.

Explanations for the incomplete nature of the Dicta and its considerable divergencies from its original may, perhaps, be found both in Ashby's prologue to the Active Policy of a Prince and by comparing it with another popular genre of poetry. At the end of the prologue Ashby, having described the benefits prince Edward would derive from studying the past and the present, explained the purpose of concentrating on the future:

> "etiam fore activum in pollecia et
> sapiencia ... subditorum securitate
> & bona custodia sub debita et fideli
> obediencia per advisamenta edicta &
> opiniones diversorum Philosophorum ..."[1]

In fact the prince was being offered a code of moral practice, specifically linked to the longest and weightiest part of the poem in which five out of the eight quotations from the Liber occurred. The most logical arrangement in these circumstances was to tack it

1. Bateson, op.cit., p.13. "...furthermore that you shall be active in policy and wisdom ... for the safety of your subjects and their good care as they are under obligation to render faithful obedience to you according to the advice, sayings and opinions of many of the philosophers..."

on to the conclusion of the poem.

The structure and contents of the Dicta et Opiniones Diversorum Philosophorum in no way resemble those of the other contemporary English versions of the work or of the Latin original printed by Franceschini. It does, however, closely follow the pattern of fifteenth century proverb poems such as Benedict Burgh's translation from the Latin of the Distichs of Cato or the Summum Sapientiae which some scholars attribute to John Lydgate. Napierkowski in his edition of the latter actually referred to Ashby's Dicta as an example of the genre,[1] but it was not his concern to spell out the significance of the form or to provide a precise account of the nature and purpose of the translation. In all three works the wise saying of an ancient authority was given in prose followed by a stanza in rhyme royal elaborating the sentiment in aureate terms. Ashby is likely to have been influenced by both the works in the Lydgate canon. The Summum was dedicated to a:

> "Most cristian princesse. our alther souverayne
> In qtenely ordre. diewly consecrate."[2]

There is considerable controversy, rehearsed by Napierkowski, about the identity of the queen referred to, but Margaret of Anjou would seem to have been the most likely recipient. Since several copies of the manuscript were clearly in circulation by 1450, a court servant such as Ashby could have had access to one. Harley 2251

1. T.J. Napierkowski, A Critical Edition of the 'Summum Sapientiae', Ph.D, Thesis (University of Colorado, 1971).

2. British Library, MS Harley 2251, f.167v.

also contains the Burgh Cato and the verses on the Cardinal Virtues which were the source of stanza 131 of the Active Policy. Ashby could not have used this volume as the hand dates from the 1470s but it is a copy of a lost Shirley manuscript which must have dated from the middle of the century. Ashby may well have used the original as he was a fervent admirer of Lydgate whose poems Shirley collected so assiduously. Although Ashby adopted the proverb poem form of composition, the Liber Philosophorum rather than the Summum Sapientiae or any other such work was his source as he clearly stated in the prologue to the Active Policy. The criterion on which his selection of sayings was presumably based was to choose pieces of advice which best encompassed what he considered to be the ideal conduct for a prince.

The end of the unique manuscript of the Dicta is missing, so it is impossible to say how much more of the same was originally produced and whether, in an epilogue, Ashby gave some explanation of this unprepossessing work. The volume was rebound by Douglas Cockerell and son in 1968 and is stitched so tightly that the gatherings are hard to count. The norm seems to be gatherings of three double pages and the last has only two. It may be that only one page is missing from the volume but it cannot be proved that there were not originally further gatherings after folio 48v. In any case, it is most unlikely that Ashby, a very old man, would have had the stamina to complete the versification of the whole of the Liber. Indeed it would have been difficult to do so in any systematic fashion given the totally haphazard selection of the sayings which he did choose to render into English. With the failure of any discernible theme to emerge from what does survive, the Dicta may best be described as an appendage to the Active Policy

rather than as a work that was ever intended to stand in its own right. The brevity and unevenness of the Dicta may also be explained by the probability that Ashby was anxious to complete a work which, like the earlier Prisoner's Reflections, was a response to a particular situation. The opportunity afforded to the Lancastrians in 1470-71 by the weakness of Edward IV and the defection of Warwick and Clarence was just the situation to draw from their faithful servant a last effort to advise them to learn from their earlier mistakes and govern the country with strength and wisdom.

The fifteenth century followers of Chaucer contributed three notable works to the corpus of English books of advice to princes. All three writers were members of the Court circle and loyal to the Lancastrian monarch, nursing no aspirations to formulate novel theories of political or ethical conduct. The time span between the treatises and the varying ages of the authors, however, explain to a large extent differences in their approach. Hoccleve, still a fairly young man, was writing early in the strong and successful reign of Henry V. The originality of his work lies in his vigorous, racy style and preoccupation with personal affairs. The actual content of his advice, apart perhaps from advocacy of peace with France, was very conventional. It would have been surprising to find any other approach from a humble government employee whose main purpose, self proclaimed, was to secure back payments of his annuity.

Lydgate was old and near to death when he undertook a verse translation of the Secretum Secretorum. He had offered political advice throughout his long career as Court poet both to Henry V and his son. By the late 1440s the futility of such counsel was

becoming all too clear. At least in one respect, however, the king could be said to be a successful product of the education the priests and religious who surrounded him had so assiduously provided; he was personally virtuous and devout.[1] Lydgate responded to Henry's invitation to undertake a work which stressed the ethical and magical dimensions of the royal role, there was no obligation to engage with the problems of contemporary England. The essentially traditional and non-controversial nature of both the Regement and the Secrees strongly appealed to the literate public. The survival of thirty copies of the former and twenty six of the latter which date from the fifteenth century testify convincingly to their popularity.[2]

Ashby composed his Active Policy and Dicta at a time when there was no possibility of overlooking the weaknesses that had characterised Lancastrian rule in the middle decades of the century. Despite his great age, he felt obliged to recapitulate for the benefit of prince Edward the factors that could impair royal authority and suggest the means of avoiding such difficulties in the future. The resulting treatise was a work of considerable originality even if the actual recommendations lacked the innovatory quality and coherence of those made, almost simultaneously, by Sir John Fortescue in the De Laudibus Legum Anglie.[3]

1. R. Lovat, 'A Collector of Apocryphal Anecdotes: John Blacman Revisited', Property and Politics: Essay in Late Medieval History, ed. A.J. Pollard, (Gloucester, 1984), pp.172-197. In the face of recent evidence provided by Wolffe, op.cit., pp.108, 125-34 and 169-76 and Griffiths, op.cit., pp.346-9 and 678-84 of Henry's capacity to take political initiatives, Lovat re-asserts his irrational, spiritual character.
2. See Appendix 1.
3. See below chap. 5.

Unlike the latter the Active Policy was founded on the assumption that the monarchy was limited only by its obligation to observe the Divine Law, in this respect Ashby was just as conservative as Hoccleve and Lydgate. The most remarkable aspect of the work, however, is not its undeniable failings but the fact that it is the first piece of largely original political advice to be offered by a layman who was neither an eminent lawyer nor a great lord. The popularity of the work of Chaucer and his followers at the Lancastrian Court since the beginning of the century may well have persuaded the amateur poet that stanzas in rhyme royal would be the most acceptable medium for his counsel.

Chapter 3

English Translations of books of advice produced in France

The first chapter stressed the strong interest which still existed on the part of princes and their subjects in traditional books of advice in England in the fifteenth century. The impact of Chaucer and his followers on the genre was then discussed, particularly the original poem by George Ashby. One other significent influence on the corpus of such works can be discerned: that of French writers such as Honore Bouvet,[1] Jacobus de Cessolis, Christine de Pisan and Alain Chartier. With the exception of de Cessolis, who was a moralist organising his material almost as a sequence of sermons, these writers primarily addressed themselves to the French court in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. They attempted to identify the predominating weaknesses of government and military provision and to proscribe the means by which they could be remedied. One of the most strongly and widely held criticisms of Henry VI's rule in the middle years of the century was that it had allowed the loss of the French territories. The taste for recent French literature can be attributed not only to the Yorkist and Lancastrian monarchs and their families but also to Sir John Fastolf, the Pastons and William Caxton. Such people were by their military, commercial and

1. For Bouvet see N.A.R. Wright, 'The Tree of Battles of Honore Bouvet and the Laws of War', War, Literature and Politics in the Late Middle Ages, ed. C.T. Allmand, (Liverpool, 1976), pp. 12-31.

diplomatic activities in a position to experience this literature and appreciate its potential value for English princes. The present chapter discusses three examples of such works; they were translated into English for Sir John Fastolf, George, duke of Clarence and an anonymous recipient. The following chapter will concentrate on the Boke of Noblesse which was apparently conceived by Fastolf and finally presented by William Worcester to Edward IV. It contains a significant amount of original material but also incorporates substantial extracts from Bouvet, de Pisan and Chartier.

(i) 'The Epistle of Othea' and 'The Body of Polycye' by Christine de Pisan

The works of Christine de Pisan swiftly achieved popularity both in France and in England.[1] This started during Christine's lifetime and showed few signs of diminishing throughout the remainder of the fifteenth century. Many of her writings were addressed to particular circumstances within French political and cultural life; her history of Charles V, for example, her contributions to the controversy over the Romance of the Rose and the various exhortations concerning the disordered state of the nation. A number of works, however, had a wider appeal and, in the original French, were circulating in England during the first half of the century.[2] Two works by Christine which were translated into

1. P.G.C. Campbell, 'Christine de Pisan en Angleterre', Revue de Littérature Comparée, V, 1925, pp. 659-70.

2. Campbell, op.cit., pp. 659-670. He lists the manuscripts of fifteenth century date surviving in English libraries. The Epistle of Othea was the most popular. See Appendix 1.

English in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, apart from the Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye mentioned above, can be included in the category of books of advice to princes as defined in this study: the Epistle of Othea to Hector and the Body of Polycye.

As a literary composition the Othea is not a great success.[1] A hundred verses, mostly quatrains, describing a virtue or a vice connected with a famous figure of antiquity are followed by prose glosses which amplify the story and apply it to the situation of a young knight, usually with the support of a quotation from a philosopher. Finally allegories point out the Christian significance of the anecdotes or virtues described, authorised by the sayings of the Doctors of the Church and extracts from the Bible. Christine was almost wholly dependent in this offering on the following: an Ovide moralisé, the Histoire ancienne jusqua Cesar, the Manipulus Florum of Thomas of Hibernia, the Dits moraulx des Philosophes in Guillaume de Tignonville's recent translation from the Latin, the Flores Bibliorum and the Chapelet des vertus.

James D. Gordon in his 1942 edition of the Epistle made an analysis of its subject matter, dealing separately with the three components of each chapter.[2] Predictably the themes are an accurate reflection of Christine's heavy reliance on her sources; although

1. Except where otherwise stated, references in this section are made to the text and Introduction of C.F. Buhler's edition of The Epistle of Othea, op.cit.

2. J.D. Gordon, The Epistle of Othea to Hector, edited from the Harleian Manuscript 838, Dissertation (Philadelphia, 1942), Introduction, pp.ix-xiii.

the arrangement of each chapter is the same, what little coherence of theme that may be detected in the work emerges from the concluding moralities rather than from the earlier sections of each chapter. Apart from the virtue of Temperance (chap.2), Nimrod (chap.89) and Augustus and the Sibyl in the last chapter, all the classical figures referred to in the narratives were Greek in origin, although deities are invariably given their Roman names. From chapter 73, the judgement of Paris, there is some vaguely chronological treatment of the Trojan War.[1] Yet later episodes, such as the death of Achilles (chap.40) and Ulysses and Polyphemus (chap.19) occur much earlier in the book; even after chapter 73 other stories, such as the fate of Echo, are interposed. This supports Gordon's opinion that Christine did not think of this piece as a sequence of stories.[2]

The chivalric virtues described in each gloss which refer to the preceding narrative also lack any coherence in arrangement. Only the final gloss may be interpreted as bearing a special significance for Christine and her readers, that the advice of a wise woman was not to be disdained:

> "And be-cause that Cesar Augustus, the which
> was prince of all the worlde, lerned to knowe
> God and the beleve of a womman, to the purpos
> may be seide the auctorite that Hermes seith:
> Be not ashamed to here trouthe and good teching

1. The work is described as a history of Troy in some fifteenth century manuscripts.

2. Gordon, op.cit., p.xiv.

of whom that ever seith it."[1]

Here Christine secured for herself by analogy a position similar to those male writers who, for centuries, had implied that they advised their princes as the great Aristotle had counselled Alexander.

The moralities do follow some recognisable pattern for the first part of the book. The four Cardinal Virtues, starting with Othea herself, the goddess of Prudence, precede the major Christian virtues such as Truth, Mercy, Faith, Hope and Charity. The seven Deadly Sins follow, then articles from the Credo and the Ten Commandments. In the second part of the book[2] the moralities do not follow a particular theme but the advice offered, to shun worldly pleasures and avoid hypocrisy, for example, is very similar to that found in many ethical and moral works of the later middle ages, including books of instruction for princes. Living by her pen as she did, Christine was bound to produce a few pot-boilers from time to time. Neither logical structure nor originality of content seem to have been prized by the laity in works of this kind as the immediate popularity of the Othea testifies.

Stephen Scrope was the first known English translator of the Epistle of Othea. The probable motives for his translations of popular French texts and his style have been discussed above in chapter I. A reasonably unambiguous statement about his work on the Othea survives in the shape of a Preface to the Longleat

1. Othea, p.120.
2. From chap.45.

version of his translation.[1] This Preface does not appear in the other two contemporary copies of Scrope's work.[2] It was almost certainly produced in the original text as Scrope addressed himself to his step-father, Sir John Fastolf, for whom he undertook the translation "by yowre commaundementes". He remarked that, at sixty years, Fastolf was too aged to continue the active use of arms and must instead devote himself to spiritual and moral feats. This puts the probable date of translation in or near 1440 when Fastolf, recently returned from France, reached the age given in the Preface.[3] The two later dedications, unlike the Longleat MS, follow very closely the pattern of those made by Christine to various prospective royal patrons. The address to the Duke of Buckingham might have been made at any time between the creation of his dukedom in 1444 and his death at the battle of Northampton in 1460. The dedication to the "hye princesse" is impossible to date and could have been made at any time between 1440 and Scrope's death in 1472 although, since the Pierpoint Morgan MS is dated to the mid fifteenth century, it is likely to be nearer to the former date than to the latter. The identity of the "princesse" remains

1. MS Longleat 253, Collection of the Marquis of Bath, mid fifteenth century vellum, ff.2-75v.

2. MS H 5 St John's College, Cambridge, mid fifteenth century vellum, ff.1-60r, dedicated to the Duke of Buckingham. MS M 775, Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York, mid fifteenth century vellum, ff.200-74, dedicated to "a hye princesse". Belonged to Sir John Astley, died 1486.

3. But see K. Chesney who suggests a later date, 'Two Manuscripts of Christine de Pisan', Medium Aevum, vol.I, 1932, pp.35-41. Buhler refers to this article for other purposes but does not pursue the questions she raises.

unknown. Buhler aired a few possibilities but came to no firm conclusion.[1]

The work resembles Scrope's later translation of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers in respect of its total lack of originality. Despite the fact that he was quite capable of writing original if conventionally pious and laudatory prose, as is shown in the Preface, Scrope chose to adhere closely to Christine's text. The work concentrated exclusively on morals drawn from classical tales and worthy sentiments derived from the Fathers and other Christian writers; no attempt was made either by the authoress or her translator to make references to contemporary authorities or events. Whilst Christine showed herself quite prepared to do so in some of her other works Scrope, unlike his step-father and William Worcester, appears to have had no inclination to concern himself with politics or modern warfare.[2] Both in his choice of pseudo-classical subject matter for translation and in his personal writings, he seems to have been preoccupied with his own

1. Othea, Introduction, pp.xix-xxi. Buhler does not believe that the manuscript of the Épître d'Othéa which belonged to Fastolf and which survives as Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud 570, is the original French text used by Scrope. See C.F. Buhler, 'Sir John Fastolf's Manuscripts of the Épître d'Othéa and Stephen Scrope's Translation of this Text', Scriptorium, vol.iii, 1949, pp.123-8.

2. To be fair to Scrope, however, as has already been suggested above in relation to the Dicts translation, it may have been his stepfather's choice. Fastolf owned two French versions of the Othea. See Chesney, op.cit., and Buhler, 'Sir John Fastolf's Manuscripts of the Épître d'Othéa.

interests.[1] It was probably this narrow approach to affairs in conjunction with his poor health which doomed him to sustain an existence depressed by poverty and dependence on his stepfather and other powerful patrons. Unlike men who had the status and influence of Fortescue or the practical experience of Ashby, Scrope was ill-equipped to offer original advice to the great ones who were his patrons as to how they should conduct themselves

A second English translation of the Epistle of Othea was made in the fifteenth century; it was edited by Gordon and reference has already been made to its Introduction. Gordon linkes the work with Anthony Babynton whose name occurs in another article of the unique manuscript;[2] this he believes to be written in the same hand as the translation of the Othea. He suggests that this may be Sir Anthony Babynton of Dethick who lived from about 1477 to 1537/8. After giving profuse details about his life, Gordon abruptly concludes in the Introduction that the translation must, on linguistic grounds, date from a period earlier than the end of the fifteenth century.[3] He considers that the language of the

1. Schedule of Grievances, transcribed from British Library, Additional MS 28, 209, ff.21r-22r. The style, given the less formal nature of the piece, seems consistent with that employed in his translations: "Item than be his licence I come in to Yngland to my seide moder/ and I was not ther fully a yere/ but that he sente home worde that I sholde paie for my mete and my drynke I havyng no lyveloode wherwith to paie."

2. British Library, MS Harley 838, ff.67r-91v. On the first page of the manuscript the names of several members of the Babynton family occur including "Henry" and "Anthony" and the date 1550. "Anthony Babynton" occurs on f.8v.

3. Gordon, op.cit., pp.lxii-lxiii.

piece is characteristic of the southern area of the east Midlands and is probably fairly typical of standard usage and that it seems to belong to a period not much later than that in which Scrope's work was done. He thus severs, albeit without much conviction, the link he had first suggested between this translation and Anthony Babynton of Dethick and concludes that Harley 838 is likely to be a copy of the original translation.[1] Wright believes the Anthony Babynton, mentioned in the manuscript in several places, to be the son of Henry Babynton of Dethick, not his father. The former was the man who gave his name to the notorious Babynton Plot against Queen Elizabeth (he lived from 1561 to his execution in 1586).[2] The main significance that an attribution of this version to a named translator could have for the present purpose would be to furnish some kind of reason why it was done. In the absence of any statement about this or dedication no inferences can be drawn.

The outstanding and unique characteristic of the Babynton MS is the existence of a Proem which has no parallel in any of the French copies of Christine's text or in Scrope's version. This consists of twenty four verses in rhyme royal on the theme of the presence of the Trinity throughout Nature and the world of men. Professor Campbell voiced his opinion to Gordon that it was not by Christine de Pisan and, given its absence from any French manuscript and the Scrope translations, the likelihood would seem to be that it was an original composition of the translator of the

1. Gordon, op.cit., Introduction, p.lxiii.

2. C.E. Wright, Fontes Harleiani (British Museum Bicentenary Publications, London, 1972), p.58.

Babynton Othea.[1] The nature of the Proem, where entertainment is firmly subordinated to devotion, may indicate a clerical rather than a lay hand at work:

> "And as the degre comparative no-ways
> may atteyne
> Unto the superlative as in comparacoun
> Ryght so the estat of knyghthod is
> under the souereygn
> Estat off holy church, to whom the
> dominacioun
> Superlative is gyff, wyche shold with
> contemplacioun
> Be mirrour & exsample unto that other
> tweyn
> Off her synfull lyvyng the brydell to
> restreyn."[2]

There are no significant additions to the text and nothing of great consequence is left out. Any variations may be explained by the use the writer made of the original French manuscript and the omission of small parts of the Othea from it. Apart from having an inferior text to work from, the translator showed himself to be a competent rather than an outstanding scholar: the frequency of mistakes has been calculated to be about two a page. The style is

1. Gordon, op.cit., Introduction, p.xxxviii.
2. Ibid., p.3, verse viii.

generally clear but adheres closely to the form of the original text and is in no way remarkable.

Le Livre du Corps de Policie by Christine de Pisan is another work that may be included in the genre of books of instruction for princes, young noblemen and gentlemen.[1] It can be dated between November 1404, the date of the Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V to which she refers in the text of the Corps, and November 1407, the month in which Orleans, also mentioned in the text, was assassinated. The treatise was intended to be a political and moral guide to royal princes and particularly to the Dauphin, Louis of Guienne.[2] The first part offers the traditional kind of advice to princes, the second is a chivalric manual for knights and the third explains the duties of the other estates of the realm. As in her other works of substance, Christine is heavily reliant on a selection of well known authorities for moral and chivalrous precepts and anecdotes: the Facta et dicta memorabilia of Valerius Maximus, de Gauchi's French translation of Egidio Colonna's De Regimine Principum, the Bible, Aristotle's Ethics, Politics, Rhetoric and Metaphysics, the De Re Militari of Vegetius, Cicero's De Officiis and De Senectute and the De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius.

Part I, the advice to princes, generally reflects the structure of Egidio's De Regimine; it commenced with the education of a prince and proceeded to such familiar topics as the need for a

1. Le Livre du Corps de Policie, ed. R.H. Lucas, Textes Littéraires Français (Geneva, 1967).

2. The Middle English Translation of Christine de Pisan's 'Livre du Corps de Policie', ed.D. Bornstein, Middle English Texts, 7 (Heidelberg, 1977) p.12. The remainder of this section refers to this edition.

prince to maintain Justice and Religion and show liberality, mercy and courtesy. He should take the advice of wise counsellors, choose good officers to rule beneath him and honour his knights and gentlemen. he should shun vices but allow himself reasonable recreation. Part II, the handbook for knights, used Vegetius to advocate good conduct which was then extensively illustrated by anecdotes from Valerius Maximus. Part III which dealt with the Commons, was rather perfunctory; the authoress was no doubt aware that this section would command the least interest amongst her courtly audience. The degree of her involvement in the three sections may be crudely indicated by the fact that part II is two thirds the length of part I and that part III is only three fifths the length of part II. Her interest lay so strongly in the Court circle that it is possible that she only undertook part III because she had emulated John of Salisbury in choosing the body politic as the theme on which she was to base her advice to princes and noblemen. The human frame she so constructed could hardly be left without an abdomen, legs and feet.

Despite the predominantly courtly preoccupations of the book, the Corps does differ in one important respect from the Othea and this brings it closer to the political situation in early fifteenth century France.[1] On several occasions in the course of her enumeration of the duties of the prince and the various estates, Christine drew moral inferences from contemporary life. The most

1. G. Mombello, 'Quelques aspects de la pensée politique de Christine de Pisan d'apres ses oeuvre publiées', Culture et Politique en France à l'Epoque de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance (Turin, 1974), pp.43-153.

spectacular example is to be found in chapter II of part I. Whilst speaking of the love and care that a prince should have for his subjects, she launched into an attack on the court officials and nobles who burdened the poor with taxes for their own profit without themselves making any contribution to the cost of government:

> "Car c'est ung merveilleux droit je l'ose dire, a qui qu'il en desplaise, sauve leur reverence, que les riches et les gros officiers du roy ou des princes qui ont leur estat grant et puissant du roy et des princes qui bien peuent porter la charge en soient exceptés, et des povres qui n'ont du roy nul emolument soient tenus de paier."[1]

There may seem to be some disparity between Christine's desire to please her noble audience and such frank outbursts. It is, however, quite clear from all her works that she had a strong moral sense. She did, after all, end her life in a nunnery. Such exhortations as that given above belong to a clerical tradition of homilies and sermons rather than to an exclusively literary genre. For centuries the bishops, priests and monks of Christendom had sought to inculcate religious principles into princes and nobles who they

1. Lucas, op.cit., pp.31-32. "For it is a marvellous right, I day say to those who it will displease, saving their reverence, that the rich and great office holders of the king and princes who could easily sustain the burden (of taxes) are exempted. The poor who receive no bounty from the king are obliged to pay."

saw as predominantly governed by motives of ambition, greed and lust. Christine and her family had served the kings of France for several decades by the early fifteenth century and she enjoyed a considerable reputation as a writer. There is no evidence to suggest that she suffered materially from her frankness either in the Corps or in her other works which touched on contemporary politics.

A unique copy of an English translation of the Corps de Policie exists in the Cambridge University Library, MS Kk.1.5, ff.1-79v. It is collected with a number of later works but the Body of Polycye, as the translation is entitled, is written in a fifteenth century hand. The volume, which was bound in the sixteenth century, starts with the first page of the Body, so any clues the fly leaf might have provided about the translator have disappeared. A piece of paper is stuck on the reverse of the cover, facing the incipit of the Body, but it simply contains a list of the contents in a later hand. Bornstein does not mention that from folio 7v brief marginal comments appear on the text such as "Not(e?) well prynce", "This is trouth" and "Bewar". The hand which is large and shaky, not that of a professional scribe, may be contemporary with the script or could be later.[1] On folio 30r a neat, later hand makes a Latin comment on a quotation from Ptolemy. In the margin of folio 10v three almost illegible words are scrawled: "A(?) tu(?) Antoni Kandauc(?)". The first page is

1. He also puts many signs in the margin as follows: ☞. See unpublished description of MS by M.R. James, c.1930, in Manuscripts Department of Cambridge University Library.

decorated with a border of flowers and foliage and a large blue initial "H" which contains the arms of the Haute family. The most likely person to have commissioned the manuscript (although not necessarily the translation) was Richard Haute, the son of a marriage of William Haute and Joan Woodville.[1] Richard was an MP, a knight and, no doubt as a mark of favour from his cousin Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers, was made Comptroller of the Household of Edward V in 12483. Peter Fleming has identified the Haute family as forming the centre of a network of literary and cultural patronage and interests amongst the gentry of Kent.[2] The manuscript later passed to Richard Holdsworth, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and was acquired by the University after his death in 1649.

Bornstein identifies the translation as cultivating the "style clergial" employed by Christine in the original. It had been used in Latin correspondence by late medieval chancellories and was transmuted into the vernacular in both England and France.[3] Although, unlike Stephen Scrope, the author used idiomatic English, the text has been closely adhered to throughout. The most interesting manifestation of this fidelity is the almost invariable retention of France as the country used as a source of contemporary illustrations. The translator made no distinction

1. Bornstein, op.cit., Introduction, pp.18-19.

2. Paper presented at Harlaxton in July, 1986. For other work on Kentish gentry values see P.W. Fleming, 'Charity, Faith, and the Gentry of Kent 1422-1529', Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History, ed. T. Pollard, (Gloucester, 1984), pp.36-58.

3. Bornstein, pp.26-27.

between unfavourable comments on lawlessness and injustice[1] and laudatory remarks about England's great enemy, Charles V:

> "... he wolde lacke no poynte to sett his premisses in faire and due ordre, and wolde departe his matiers in dyverse poyntes as the caas requyred, and aftirwarde conclude to his intent right nobeley, like as he full honourabely declared bifor the emperour his oncle whan he was at Parys, wher he shewed all along before the counceille of that on and of the tothir the wrongis don unto him by the kyng of Englond or he wolde begynne the werre."[2]

Only in chapter 29 did the translator substitute the name of England for France. The subject was the obligation of the prince to foster and reward his knights and gentlemen:

> "(W)ho may than sufficiantly rewarde a manly knyght or a good man of armes, well manered and of good condicion, true in dede and in courage, wyse in governyng and diligent in pursewyng knyghthode? Alas, suche people be not rewardid in Englond aftir their desertis. For and the(y) wer honoured aftir their dute and

1. Body, op.cit., p.58.
2. Ibid., p.102.

> that ther wer on good knyght so rewardid, it shulde cause an hundred to be good, like as the worthy Romayns did som tyme."[1]

A similar sentiment was reiterated at the end of the chapter.[2] This break with the normal close adherence to the original could indicate that the translator had a particular interest in knighthood he might even have harboured a grievance that his own or his family's deeds of valour and loyalty had not been duly recognised. If the translation was made in the early 1470s, the sentiments could also reflect an enthusiasm amongst the nobility and gentry for the king's project to make war, in such circumstances the "manly knyght" would really come into his own.

The Body of Polycye is anonymous and, although the one surviving manuscript is complete, it yields no conclusive internal evidence as to whom the translator might have been as it begins and ends in exactly the same fashion as the original French version. This lack of positive evidence, however, has not deterred Bornstein from offering a tentative theory concerning the origin of the work. She cites passages from the Epilogues of the Cordyale[3] and the Morale Proverbs,[4] both translations by Earl Rivers, to support her suggestion. In the former Caxton remarked that Rivers translated "diverse bookes out of frensh into english" and that he had seen

1. Body, op.cit., p.106.
2. Ibid., p.109.
3. Crotch, op.cit., pp.38-39.
4. Ibid., p.32.

other such books besides those that he had printed. In the latter, Rivers himself expressed his admiration for Christine, implying that the Morale Proverbes was not the only specimen of her work that he had read. Indeed the existence of his signature on British Library Harley MS 4431, a large collection of Christine's writings which passed to his mother, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, from her first husband, John, Duke of Bedford, implies an extensive knowledge of the Pisan canon. The combination of courtly subject matter with a high moral tone entirely coincides with what is known of Rivers' own predilections. The style of translation also tends to substantiate Bornstein's hypothesis. The English version remains close to the sense of the original without, however, indulging in the slavish and sometimes senseless copying of sentence structures which are a feature of Scrope's renderings. The very absence of a dedication or explanation of why the book has been produced could indicate that it was made by a great man for his own pleasure rather than by a professional writer in the hope of profit. Finally, the Body of Polyce accords very well with Rivers' declared intention in the Dicts of producing fitting reading matter for the Prince of Wales. One objection which might be made to this theory is that the translator follows the original very closely, contrary to Rivers' practice in his version of the Dicts. This is so, but the Blades edition of his translation of the Morale Proverbes sets the English text opposite the original French in an appendix to the facsimile and clearly demonstrates that, when the noble lord had a mind to be precise, he could follow his original with supreme

fidelity.[1] The distinction to be made is possibly between the treatment he thought appropriate for an ancient, anonymous and rambling work such as the Dicts and the respectful rendering due to the writings of a near contemporary and esteemed authoress like Christine, for her work manifested a discernible structure which it would have been an act of philistinism to disrupt. To conclude, it is unlikely that it will ever be possible positively to attribute the Body of Polycye to a translator but, at present, the balance of probability favours Rivers. There is at least a possibility that the one surviving manuscript of the work was the unique copy and that it passed before the end of the fifteenth century into the hands of his cousins, the Hautes.

It remains to assess the significance of the books described above to those who were the intended recipients of the English translations. The first motive would clearly be a desire for easy access to works that enjoyed a high reputation on both sides of the channel and which constituted the kind of undemanding conventional reading matter that the upper class laity of the mid and late fifteenth century would find congenial. There is no indication that any of the three translations discussed above were ever intended for more than a very limited readership:[2] probably

1. Morale Proverbs, composed in French by Cristyne de Pisan. Translated by the Earl Rivers, and reprinted from the original edition of William Caxton, AD 1478, with introductory remarks by William Blades (London, 1859).

2. This may be contrasted with Rivers's clear intention to disseminate the three translations he gave to Caxton to be printed more widely than amongst his immediate circle.

confined in the case of Scrope's Othea to the three presentation manuscripts produced for his three prospective patrons, which seem to have disappeared, and the copies, of which three survive.[1] The Babynton version of the Othea printed by Gordon is unique, although a sixteenth century printed edition by Robert Wyer (c.1540) may be based on it. There is no sign of a dedication at either the beginning or the end of the manuscript. Similarly, the unique Cambridge University Library MS of the Body of Polycye gives no indication that the translator was trying to please a patron.

Additional reasons for the making of the translations must depend on the probable requirements of those people of power and influence for whom we know or suppose the works were intended. Fastolf and the duke of Buckingham both occupied positions of considerable authority. The former was a trusted captain in the wars with the French, an adviser to the duke of Bedford and a substantial landowner. The duke of Buckingham distinguished himself throughout his career for his loyalty to king Henry VI. He took a relatively impartial approach to the power struggle which, progressively during the middle years of the century, drove the nobility to identify with either the Yorkists or the royalists. It is hard to see how the pleasant but anodyne verses and moral sayings of the Othea could have been of much practical assistance to either of these hard pressed men of affairs. If the Woodvilles did have anything to do with the production of the Body of Polycye, it is easy to understand the appeal that the book would have held for them. The advice to princes and knights accords very well with

1. Othea, op.cit., Introduction, pp.xiv-xxviii.

what is known of the beliefs and tastes of Lord Rivers and the nature of the instruction given suited perfectly the offices held by both Rivers and Haute in the service of the prince of Wales. The very anonymity of the translation might indicate that it was intended to be introduced to the young prince in person by its author or his cousin. Sufficient evidence survives, in any case, of the high esteem in which the Othea was held by the prince's father. British Library R;oyal MS 14 E II was executed for Edward IV between 1473 and 1483. The borders of folio 1 contain the arms of the monarch and his two sons. It comprises a collection in French of courtly works such as Ramon Lull's Order of Chivalry and the Epistle of Othea.

The verdict on all three translations must be that their most remarkable feature is their lack of originality: they indicate the conservatism of the English upper classes at this time. No need was felt for books of challenging intellectual content or for novel political programmes. The tendency to look to the distant past for examples of good royal and noble conduct was particularly marked in the Othea, the more popular of the two books in England if the number of French fifteenth century manuscripts which survive is any indication.[1] Even the contemporary references in the Body of Polycye were made to illustrate time honoured sentiments which had found their place in books of advice at least from the time of the Secretum. There was ample opportunity for an English translator to

1. Five are named by Campbell, op.cit., pp.663-4, and an additional two by Chesney, op.cit. See Appendix I. No French manuscripts of the Body of Polycye have been identified.

adapt some of Christine's examples and even to introduce further illustrations drawn from the rich and turbulent texture of contemporary English society but, apart from the ambiguous case of chapter 29, the anonymous translator adhered closely to his original.

The conclusion must be drawn that the very appeal of such works for the monarchy and nobility lay in the traditional nature of the advice that they offered. In the Othea they repeated the pleasant and familiar old classical stories of the kind to be found in the moralised Ovids and Valerius Maximus. The Body of Polycye confirmed accepted views of the hierarchical order of society and the obligations of each estate in a manner which must have been very comforting for aristocrats and princes. Green has said:

> "To acquire the status of an authority, of course, a work had either to be of some antiquity itself, believed to be of authority, or based extensively on older sources."[1]

Chapter 5 will demonstrate how only Sir John Fortescue amongst contemporary authors of original works felt no need to proclaim that his books were based largely on traditional authorities. Even he cited titles of venerable works in his major treatises. Those Englishmen who purchased French copies of the Othea, together with the patrons of English versions of Christine's

1. Green, op.cit., p.149.

books, were not seeking to bring about innovations in the government. They required advice which was already familiar to them, either from their education or from contacts with like minded contemporaries.

The function of these books of advice was not to suggest new policies to the kings or their followers or to criticise the basis of their government, but to reflect the values of the ruling class and establish its standards of behaviour. Christine hand an appropriate message for each estate in the Body of Polycye:

> "(Of princes) For in what londe or place
> that a prynce is not doubted ther may be
> no good iustyce."[1]

> "(Of nobles and the common people) For it
> suffyseth me ... to shewe the maner and
> the fourme that longith to every man in
> such ordre as God hathe called him to,
> that is to wete the noble do as noble men
> shulde, the comon people also suche thyngis
> as longeth to theim, (in) suche wyse as may
> be referred in one body of policye to leve
> togedir in peas and in iustice as they
> ought to doo."[2]

1. Op.cit., 89.
2. Ibid., p.117.

The ethical code of the classical philosophers had been adapted for Christian needs by the fathers and, latterly, by divines such as St Thomas Aquinas and Egidio Colonna. Christine de Pisan was occasionally vehement in her moral strictures on the abuses of power, but there was never any suggestion that the order of society should be changed.

> "Elle a fait l'éloge de la monarchie qui représentait, pour elle, la meilleure form de gouvernement et si elle a détesté le peuple insurgé elle a su rendre hommage au labeur des humbles."[1]

The very survival of the body politic was dependent upon good conduct in all its parts. These reassuring sentiments made both the Othea and the less well known Body of Polycye very welcome to the English ruling class.

(ii) 'The Game and Playe of the Chesse' by Jacobus de Cessolis

The last work amongst the translations and adaptations of books of advice that are considered in this chapter is William Caxton's version of the Jeu d'Echecs. Although a substantial part of the book is devoted to the duties of kings and queens, like the other works discussed above, it was not intended exclusively for

1. Mombello, op.cit., p.153. "She had made a eulogy on the monarchy which represented, for her, the best form of government, and if she detested the common rebels, she had paid tribute to the labour of the humble."

the edification of royalty. Since it may originally have been based on a collection of sermons delivered by de Cessolis, it may well always have been destined for a wider audience than were products of the French court culture such as the works of Christine de Pisan.

The Jeu d'Echecs or De Ludo Schaccorum did not have the currency in fifteenth century England enjoyed by either the Secretum Secretorum or the De Regimine Principum. Indeed it was the last of the books considered in this chapter to have been translated, although it was far from unknown as the fifteen surviving Latin and two French manuscripts testify.[1] Caxton probably had access to at least two French versions of de Cessolis. The main part of his work is closely based on de Vignay, but chapters 1 and 3 owe their form to Ferron.[2] Even his dedication to George, duke of Clarence, at the beginning of the 1474 edition, which at first sight might be assumed to be an original piece of writing, can be seen to rely heavily on the prologue de Vignay addressed to John of France, duke of Normandy, in the mid fourteenth century.[3] Apart from three separate paragraphs identified by Blake[4] as Caxton's original prose and the epilogue the entire version is derived from his two French antecedents or

1. A. van der Linde, Geschichte und Literatur des Schachspiels (Berlin, 1874), vol.I, pp.106-7, 116, lists a number of these. See also Appendix 1. Hoccleve used it in his Regement of Princes, but in no sense was this a translation.

2. Caxton's Game and Playe of the Chesse,1474, ed. W.E.A. Axon, (London, 1883) Introduction, pp.xxi-ii.

3. Axon, op.cit., pp.xxiii-xxiv, and N.F. Blake, Caxton's Own Prose (London, 1973), pp.85-86. See below for a further consideration of the prologue.

4. Ibid., pp.86-87.

from a French manuscript in which the texts had already been conflated.[1] When Caxton brought out his second edition in about 1483, after the fall and death of Clarence, he had to produce a new prologue. He chose not to dedicate it to another patron but, in his Introduction which seems to be original, he justified the work by a traditional formula drawn from the Epistles of St Paul and the Book of Wisdom. This advocated the desirability of informing the ignorant so that they might shun folly. An anecdote followed of how he came upon the book whilst he was in Bruges and how he translated and printed a number of copies:

> "Whiche anone were depesshed and solde. Wherfore by cause thys sayd book is ful of holsom wysedom and requysyte unto every astate and degree, I have purposed to enprynte it, shewyng therin the figures of suche persons as longen to the playe, In whom al astates and degrees ben comprysed."[2]

The verb 'shewyng' must refer to the sixteen woodcuts which adorn the second edition. Although they are crude in comparison to those used in some of his later books they are vigorous and, given the subject matter, they were undoubtedly specially produced rather

1. G. Painter, William Caxton (London, 1976), p.64, n.2.
2. Axon, op.cit., p.4.

than redeployed from another work, a device which was not uncommon in this period.[1] In other respects, the second edition of the Playe of Chesse is identical with the first.

The career of William Caxton is relatively well known, thanks to the work of Blades[2] in the last century and the spate of scholarship which coincided with the quincentenary of the introduction of printing to England in 1976.[3] Only two aspects of the production of the first and second editions of the Playe of Chesse merit further consideration for the purposes of the present study: namely, the exact nature of the original material which Caxton embedded in his translation and the motives which led him to dedicate it to Clarence in the first place and, latterly, to withhold any dedication at all.

A comparison of the prologue to Caxton's first edition of 1474 with the de Vignay dedication to Prince John on which it was modelled yields the following passages, apart from the substitution of proper names, which are original to the English translation:

> (To Clarence) "I ... knowe that ye are enclined unto the comyn wele of the Kynge, our sayd soveryn lord, his nobles, lordes and comyn peple of his noble royame of Englond, and that ye sawe gladly the inhabitans of the

1. E.L. Eisenstein, The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe, (Cambridge, 1983), pp.58-61.

2. W. Blades, The Life and Typography of William Caxton (London, 1861 and 1863), 2 vols.

3. Especially N.F. Blake, Caxton: England's First Publisher (London, 1976), and Painter, op.cit.

> same enformed in good, vertuous, prouffitable and honeste maners, in whiche your noble persone wyth guydyng of your hows haboundeth gyvyng light and ensample unto all other..."[1]

Caxton has made the book under the protection of Clarence,

> "not presumyung to correcte or empoigne ony-thynge ayenst your noblesse, for God be thankyd your excellent renome shyneth as well in strange regions as within the royame of England gloriously unto your honour and laude, which God multeplye and encrece, but to th'entent that other, of what estate or degre he or they stand in, may see in this sayd lityll book yf they governed themself as they ought to doo."

He asked Clarence to receive the book from him, his "humble and unknowen servant".

So closely does Caxton elsewhere adhere to de Vignay's text and so innocuous and appropriate are the phrases that he chose to omit, that George Painter's conclusion that these passages were inserted deliberately for a specific purpose is hard to reject.[2]

1. This and the following quotations come from Blake, Caxton's Own Prose, op.cit., pp.85-87

2. Painter, op.cit., pp.65-67.

This impression is heightened if the remainder of Caxton's additions are considered. An anecdote about his experience of the poverty practised by the White Friars of Ghent in book III, chapter II, does not appear to carry any subtle double meaning for the reader. The other interpolations, however, and the epilogue can certainly be interpreted as being intended to convey a particular message. Book III, chapter III, includes a bitter attack on all the advocates, men of law and attorneys of England:

> "for they entende to theyr synguler wele
> and prouffit and not to the comyn."

Similarly book IV, chapter I, has a much more general complaint against the decadent state of England compared with past times:

> "how was renoned the noble royame of Englond, alle the world dredde hit and spack worship of hit. How hit now standeth and in what haboundance I reporte me to them that knowe hit: yf ther ben theevis wythin the royame or on the see, they knowe that laboure in the royame and sayle on the see; I wote well the fame is grete therof. I pray God save that noble royame and sende good, true and politicque counceyllours to the governours of the same."

Finally the epilogue, which was entirely the original work of Caxton, seems to offer remedies to the contemporary evils on which he had touched in books III and IV. God's grace was invoked to help Edward, with the assistance of his lords, rule with such virtue that England might abound in the blessings of justice, security and prosperity.

Within the confines of what appears, at first sight, to be a fairly conventional dedication and condemnation of the corruption of the times may well be found, if Painter is right, a deliberate and abrasive rejection of the king's policies and a suggestions as to how they might be rectified. The sentiments in the prologue which are not derived directly from de Vignay, although apparently respectful to the royal authority, single out Clarence as the lord who is anxious to inform the people of England in good and honest ways:

> "in which your noble persone wyth guydyng
> of your hows haboundeth gyvyng light and
> ensample unto all other."

The "all" could be taken to include Edward himself, notorious for his liaisons with gentlewomen and townswomen alike. Clarence seems not to have acquired a similar reputation and this may have been one of the reasons why he was the favourite of his sister, the duchess of Burgundy. Whether or not Caxton was personally known to Clarence,[1] and circumstances are unlikely to have promoted their

1. "Unknowen servant" in the prologue could mean either 'obscure' or 'unknown to Clarence'.

acquaintance, it was almost certainly the pious Duchess who suggested that her brother would be a suitable patron for the second major production of his press. She may also have provided an idea of the kind of sentiments she thought it appropriate to air in the political climate of 1474.

Three years before the printing of the Game and Playe of the Chesse Clarence and king Edward had been reconciled. This reconciliation took place before the battle of Barnet which annihilated his former ally Warwick, from whom the duke had hoped, fleetingly, to receive the Crown of England. The accord had been timely from Edward's point of view and contributed towards the destruction of the Lancastrian dynasty. His inclination was, in any case, to show magnanimity towards those he defeated.[1] Yet the very removal of the greatest external threat to the Yorkist dynasty exacerbated the internal problems which were to lead to its decline and fall. Warwick's rebellion had been caused in some measure by the resentment felt by the nobility, including members of the royal family such as Clarence, against the power and wealth which had been achieved by the Woodvilles since the king had married into their large family. A new source of internal strife was added when Richard of Gloucester married Anne Neville, co-heiress to the vast Warwick/Beauchamp inheritance with Isabelle, the wife of Clarence. This had to be shared between the brothers whereas previously Anne, as the widow of the vanquished Lancastrian prince Edward, could have expected little or nothing. A wiser prince than Clarence might have managed to regain his elder brother's trust and

1. Ross, Edward IV., op.cit.,pp.66-68, 183-4.

shun the opportunities that the turbulent society of late medieval England presented for stirring up trouble. It was not until June 1477 that Clarence was arrested; his judicial murder followed in the next year. Yet Caxton's additions to the Game of Chesse provide some indication that he was attempting to present himself as an alternative source of authority and influence to his brother by 1474, and that he was receiving encouragement from the duchess of Burgundy and, possibly, from discontented members of the merchant community in Flanders.

In book IV of the Game of Chesse Caxton broke into de Vignay's text to pray that God should save the kingdom, "and sende good, true and politicque counceyllours to the governours of the same".[1] This must surely be taken in the sense that affairs were in an unsatisfactory condition and could be amended only by the advice of wise counsellors. The reference to "theevis wythin the royame or on the see" may well give vent to a particular grievance of Caxton or one of his merchant associates who had recently suffered from some act of lawlessness. The position of the sentiments, however, would obscure them from the eyes of all but the close reader. The language of the epilogue is rather more guarded but a coherent political programme still emerges. The message becomes even more pointed when the preceding pages of the book are taken into consideration. De Cessolis concluded his treatise with a summary of its contents and the reassuring information that Evilmerodach, the jolly king "withoute Justice",

1. Blake, Caxton's Own Prose, op.cit., p.87.

learnt the error of his ways through the game of chess:

> "the kynge that to fore tyme had ben vicyous and disordynate in his livyng was made Iuste. and vertuous. debonayre. gracious and full of vertues unto alle peple."[1]

The epilogue commences with another prayer that God should save Edward and give him grace "to issue as a kyng". This phrase is ambiguous for 'issue' was a technical term used in the game of chess in the middle ages to describe the moves allowed to the various pieces. It could also mean 'to become' or 'to result in' and, if taken in this sense in the epilogue, could bear the treasonable inference that Edward was not, at the time of writing, a satisfactory monarch.

The implications of the following phrases were equally contentious. The prayer continued with what amounted to a manifesto reminiscent of the reform programmes submitted to Henry VI during the later part of his reign:

> "and t'abounde in all vertues and to be assisted with allother his lordes in such wyse that his noble royame of Englond may prospere and habounde in vertues, and that synne may be eschewid, justice kepte, the royame defended, good men rewarded,

1. Axon, op.cit., p.186

> malefactours punysshid, and the ydle people be put to laboure, that he wyth the nobles of the royame may regne gloriously in conquerynge his rightfull enheritaunce that verray peas and charite may endure in bothe his royames and that marchandise may have his cours in such wise that every man eschewe synne and encrece in vertuous occupacions."

Apart from hoping that the king would abound in virtue and (twice) that his subjects would avoid sin and cultivate righteousness, Caxton provided a programme which combined the time honoured advice of the medieval books of instruction with suggestions specific to the circumstances of fifteenth century England. The upholding of justice, defence of the realm, reward of the good and punishment of wrongdoers[1] may be put into the former category. To seek the assistance of all his lords (rather than the generalised 'wise counsellors' of medieval tradition), put unemployed people to work, reconquer his French inheritance and effect the free operation of trade belongs to the latter category. Another prayer concluded the paragraph, that God would grant Clarence:

> "longe lyf and welfare, whiche he preserve and sende yow th'accomplisshement of your hye, noble, joyous and vertuous desirs. Amen."

1. Painter, op.cit., p.66, sees this as a plea for the dismissal of the lowborn Woodvilles but it reads more convincingly as a conventional request for one of the attributes of good government.

Since his desires presumably included the political objectives so clearly listed above, this can surely be interpreted as further promotion of those objectives. The impression is irresistible that the bulk of the epilogue, hedged in by the conventional prayers and dedication, constituted a programme far more detailed and specific than would be usual or acceptable in normal circumstances. In juxtaposition to the concluding paragraphs of de Cessolis, describing the reformation of king Evilmerodach, its message becomes even less ambiguous.

What would lead Caxton, a merchant in his middle age, a prominent figure in his community who had been entrusted with several political missions by Edward, to commit to print and publication material which an ill disposed reader might interpret as treasonable? Painter connects his extraordinary conduct with his loss of the post of Governor of the English Nation in Bruges in 1470 (the precise circumstances are unknown) and his application for a pardon in 1472.[1] He believes that Caxton hankered for Clarence and nurtured a grudge against Edward and his government, but has to allow that Caxton was employed throughout the period of the production and distribution of the Game of Chesse by both Edward and his ally, Charles of Burgundy. Other interpretations of Caxton's relinquishment of the post exist; Blake thought it was done "...in order to devote his time to printing".[2] Blades remarked:

"The exact date when Caxton entered the service

1. Painter, op.cit., p.67.

2. Blake, Caxton and His World (London, 1969), p.46.

> of the duchess, as well as that when he relinquished his governorship, is uncertain. The two events may have borne the relationship of cause and effect."[1]

Blake also raises a doubt as to the degree of influence Margaret of Burgundy exercised over Caxton:

> "... he was not in her service and it is unlikely that she was in any real way connected with the translation (the Historie of Troye) or the venture of printing."[2]

He is equally sceptical about any links Caxton may have had with Clarence who he thinks:

> "...had never met the printer, had probably never read the book dedicated to him, and certainly gave the printer no remuneration."[3]

A middle way can be discerned between the conflicting views of Blake and Painter. The propensity of the former to make firm but unsubstantiated statements is typified by the quotations given in the previous paragraph and must call in question the validity of some of his views. Painter's theory, on the other hand, is

1. W. Blades, The Biography and Typography of William Caxton (London, 1882), pp. 27-28.
2. Blake, Caxton: England's First Publisher, op.cit., p.23.
3. Blake, Caxton and His World, op.cit., p.64.

supported by the evidence of Caxton's own prologues and epilogues. The preface and prologue to the Recuyell of the Histories of Troye make it quite clear that Margaret of Burgundy took a close interest in the production of his first translation and there is every reason to suppose, given the subject and manner of presentation, that her interest extended similarly to the Game and Playe of the Chesse. Her partiality for Clarence expressed in an anxiety that he should be taken into Edward's closest counsels so that he might have an opportunity to exert his beneficial influence on the realm may well be voiced through Caxton in the book. He is likely, however, to have added the references to thieves on the sea and the need for the free passage of trade on his own account. From 1468 to 1474 England was engaged in a costly dispute with the Hanseatic League and this was largely due to Edward's inept handling of the situation. As Governor of the English Nation in Bruges who also had close contacts with Cologne, which was embroiled in the conflict, Caxton was one of those merchants who would have been most gravely affected by the war, the long drawn out diplomatic negotiations and the costly settlement Edward was finally forced to make.

In conclusion, it is suggested that the Ludus Schaccorum, a book already popular in the French Burgundian courts through several French translations, was recommended to Caxton by the Duchess. The moral tone, the theme of good government and the opportunity to enhance it by original insertions would strongly appeal to her. Caxton, who had already made it clear in the Recuyell how strictly he was prepared to observe her wishes, proved ready and able to execute her commands. He possibly even exceeded his brief by interpolating personal references to lawlessness at

sea and the free passage of trade. There is no compelling reason, however, to connect the implied criticism of Edward's rule contained in the book with Caxton's resignation of his post of Governor or to believe that he was ever disgraced.[1]

No proof survives that George of Clarence ever possessed a copy of the translation. Even greater uncertainty must exist as to whether Edward IV saw the first edition. If he did, the subtle propaganda it may have contained had no beneficial effect on his attititude to Clarence, which became ever harder during the ensuing years, culminating in the order for his arrest in June 1477. Only one copy of this first edition can be linked with reasonable certainty to a contemporary owner. The inventory of the books of Sir John Paston dated 1474-1479 contains a reference to a book "in preente of the playe of ..."[2] Despite the exasperating erasure that ensues, the early date and the probability that the book was in English makes it almost certain that Paston, who was a courtier, had acquired a copy of the first edition. This ties in with Caxton's remark in the prologue to the second edition that:

> "whan I so had achyeved the sayd translacion
> I dyde doo sette in enprynte a certeyn nombre
> of theym, whiche anone were depesshed and
> solde."

Regardless of the reception the book enjoyed from the royal family, the above evidence in conjunction with the fact that de Ricci[3]

1. Blake, Caxton and His World, op.cit., p.46.
2. Davis, op.cit., part I, no.316, p.517.
3. S. de Ricci, A Census of Caxtons (Oxford, 1909), pp.1-3.

recorded nineteen surviving copies indicates that it was something of a commercial success.

The good reception given to the first edition of the Game of Chesse was almost certainly the principal factor in Caxton's decision to bring out a new edition during the early 1480s, probably in 1483.[1] The embarrassing connection established in both the prologue and the epilogue with Clarence, disgraced and dead, had to be broken. The printer was well installed in Westminster by then and had enjoyed continued favours from the Yorkists. The very fact that he felt able to bring out a new edition of the Game of Chesse, even shorn of the dangerous prologue and epilogue, provides strong evidence that Edward had either been unaware of the contents of the first edition or had chosen not to take offence. His easygoing character would make the latter alternative quite possible. Caxton, who had formerly linked the inception of the translation so closely to Clarence's wishes and character, now provided a different and unexceptionable account of its production:

> "...whiche at suche tyme as I was resident in brudgys in the counte of Flaundres cam into my handes./which whan I had redde and overseen,/me semed ful necessarye for to be had in englisshe,/And in eschewyng of ydlenes And to thende that somme which have not seen it/ne understonde frenssh ne latyn I delybered in my/self to translate it into our maternal tonge."[2]

1. No date is given in the text, it is assigned to this period on typographical evidence. See Blake, Caxton and His World, op.cit., p.230.

2. Axon, op.cit., pp.3-4.

There is, however, no actual conflict between the possibility that the Duchess was the means by which Caxton received his copy or copies of the French and the decision, which in about 1483 he stated that he alone took, to make a translation. He finally and, surely, deliberately dissociated his book from any particular patron in his short epilogue to the second edition which made it clear that it was intended for the edification of all men:

> "Thenne late every man of what condycion
> he be that redyth or herith this litel
> book redde take therby ensaumple to
> amende hym."[1]

The number of surviving copies or fragments, which totals eighteen,[2] indicates that there was still a ready market for such works in the penultimate decade of the century. As in the case of the other books discussed so far, the inference must be drawn that the Lancastrian and Yorkist princes were well in tune with popular taste in their choice of books. Like the Secretum, the Dicta Philosophorum, and the De Regimine, the De Ludo Schaccorum was known both in the original and through various French translations in fifteenth century England.[3] The extent to which the English translation was undertaken at the instance of either Margaret of Burgundy or George of Clarence must remain a matter of uncertainty

1. Blake, Caxton's Own Prose, op.cit., p.88.
2. De Ricci, Census of Caxtons., op.cit., pp.21-22.
3. See Appendix 1.

but, in any case, the genuine demand for such a book was accurately assessed by Caxton who clearly derived some profit from gratifying it.

CHAPTER 4

'The Boke of Noblesse' and its 'codicil'

The Boke of Noblesse, in its present form, was produced for the purpose of influencing a particular prince at a crucial stage in his career in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. In this it resembled The Active Policy of a Prince, the De Laudibus Legum Anglie and The Governance of England. Unlike the other original works considered, however, the authorship of the book has never conclusively been established and, although it will be suggested that there is little mystery in the matter, the question of the origin of the ideas expressed is rather more complex than in the other cases. George Ashby drew on a limited range of authorities and on his own experience but imposed a unique pattern on his argument. Sir John Fortescue's work rested primarily on his own expertise and knowledge of government; he established a coherent structure for his treatises and used quotation for illustration rather than as an integral part of his themes. The author of the Boke lifted large sections including main arguments from authorities such as Cicero and Christine de Pisan. The question of authorship is further complicated by the strong probability that, although the writer or compiler of the book was William Worcester,[1] the originator and source of many of the ideas and anecdotes it contains was Sir John Fastolf. The latter may have been further supplemented by other members of his circle such as his servants John Bussard and Christopher Hanson and his stepson, Stephen Scrope.

1. He is also referred to as 'Botoner', his mother's name, in contemporary documents. His son was also called William Worcester, but it is made clear in the text when he is referred to.

The Boke of Noblesse exists in a unique manuscript in the British Library written in a hand of the third quarter of the fifteenth century.[1] It is an exhortation addressed to Edward IV to emulate the deeds of his glorious ancestors and to vindicate his right by making vigorous war against his adversary the French king to regain his French lands.[2] The companion piece also survives in one manuscript in Lambeth Palace Library, written in the same period.[3] This comprises an amorphous collection of "pieces justicatives" concerning the regency of Bedford and various dealings with the French between 1424 and 1452. They include four memoranda addressed by Sir John Fastolf to the ambassadors at Arras (1435), the duke of York, the duke of Somerset and the king's council in England. The collection is prefaced by a dedication to Richard III which has later been crudely altered so that the king's name reads as 'Edward'.

The character of Sir John Fastolf which emerges from a study of the copious records that remain of his career is very different from the great figure of Shakespearian comedy to whom a version of his name and some elements of his life history were imputed.[4] The most

1. British Library, Royal MS 18 B xxii. All quotations are taken from the edition of J.G. Nichols, The Boke of Noblesse, the Roxburghe Club (London, 1860).

2. The best account of the diplomatic moves which culminated in Edward's invasion of France in 1475 remains J. Calmette and G. Périnelle, Louis XI et l'Angleterre, 1461-83., (Paris, 1930).

3. Lambeth MS 506. Most of it was printed by J. Stevenson, Letters and Papers illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry VI, Rolls Series, 1861-4, 2 vols. Quotations are taken from this edition.

4. See above, chap. 1, for his relationship with his stepson, Stephen Scrope.

crucial factor for the purposes of the present study is that Fastolf spent a major part of his successful and profitable military career under the glorious leadership of Henry V and the almost equally glorious period of consolidation under John, duke of Bedford. The Boke of Noblesse and its 'codicil' will be shown to have been in preparation from at least the early 1450s although the final form may be presumed to have been produced only in 1475, over fifteen years after Sir John's death. William Worcester was probably offering advice based on ideas and experiences some of which were formulated by his deceased master over fifty years earlier. An attempt will be made to demonstrate, nevertheless, that these were far more potent an influence in the compilation of the Boke and its codicil than any original thoughts that may have occurred to William Worcester on the subject of the wars of the English in France.

McFarlane's article, 'The Investment of Sir John Fastolf's Profits of War',[1] demonstrated that he had various business interests as well as being a major owner of land and valuable chattels. This wealth derived in part from his marriage to Millicent Scrope but also from the rich prizes of money and land he gained in the course of many years of campaigning in France and from rewards given him by the Regent and the other great lords. The extensive references to Fastolf in the Paston Letters both before and after his death reveal his business, legal and landed interests. A man who had,

1. K.B. McFarlane, 'The Investment of Sir John Fastolf's Profits of War', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, vol. 7, 1957, pp.91-116.

derived his considerable wealth and status in so large a part from successful warfare during the first half of the fifteenth century might be expected to advocate a resumption of the wars as a panacea for the ills of the realm. This was a logical reaction to the disillusioned years when England was dominated by incompetent and self seeking courtiers and, increasingly, a French queen. The enterprise of composing an inspirational harangue for king Henry, reminding him of past glories and emphasising the justice of his cause with the support of copious quotations from biblical, classical and medieval authorities, would be a fitting conclusion to an aspect of Fastolf's life work and literary activities.

Several items certainly or probably by Fastolf himself survive in two collections of documents made by William Worcester - Lambeth 506, the 'codicil' of the Boke of Noblesse, [1] and college of Arms MS Arundel 48. Despite their practical approach and almost total absence of literary references, both bear a strong resemblance to the central idea which informs the Boke. They are all pieces of advice offered to the rulers of England and English France as to how they could prosecute the war more vigorously and successfully. In the later memoranda after the loss of Maine, expostulations predominated on the incompetence and treachery that had led to the disaster and suggestions were made as to how the situation might be remedied.

The first of the memoranda dates from 1435; it was originally produced by Fastolf for the Regent's council during the last stages of the abortive negotiations with the Burgundians and French at

1. The bulk of the manuscript appears to have been written by a number of scribes but some of the titles and addenda are in the hand of William Worcester.

Arras. He warned against putting trust in treaties with the French, for they had been broken before, and advised that instead the king should maintain his right by ruthless warfare. Two great leaders should conduct a chevauchée through Artois and Picardy down to Burgundy:

> "brennyng and distruynge alle the lande as thei pas, bothe hous, corne, veignes, and alle treis that beren fruyte for mannys sustenaunce, and alle bestaile that may not be dryven, to be distroiede ..."[1]

This chilling programme bears the genuine stamp of the cold, calculating warrior.[2] In 1440 Fastolf together with Sir William Oldhall, Sir William ap Thomas and others presented the duke of York with some instructions for the conduct of the war. They showed great

1. Stevenson, op.cit., vol.II, part 2, p.580.

2. There is room for conflicting interpretations of this document. Brill saw it as a fairly unoriginal description of the campaign methods which had been adopted by the English since the early 1430s in reaction to the improvement in the French position under the inspiration of the Maid. He also queried whether the treaty of Arras marked an important decline in English power in France. R. Brill, 'The English Preparations before the Treaty of Arras: a new interpretation of Sir John Fastolf's 'Report', September, 1435' Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, vol. VII, 1970, pp.213-47. Vale took issue with Brill's views and suggested that, at the time, Arras appeared to be a disasterous reversal to the English. The sharp and punitive war advocated by Fastolf was a new device for making reprisals against the rebels and traitors that the treaty would inevitably create. M.G.A. Vale, 'Sir John Fastolf's 'Report' of 1435: A New Interpretation Reconsidered', Nottingham Medieval Studies, vol.XVII, 1973, pp.78-84.

concern for York's personal welfare, advising him to ensure that his interests were properly safeguarded in regard to terms of service and possible compensation. Even at this early stage, before the conflict between the Yorkists and the court had become overt, the sympathies of Fastolf and Oldhall seemed to be engaged:

> "... if, for defaute of politique gouvernaunce, any inconvenient be happed to falle to any of the saide placis or charges, whiles my saide lorde shulde stonde the kingis lieutene there, (whiche God defende!) grete noise and charge shulde be laied therfore in grete partie ayenst hyme."[1]

In 1448 it was Edmund, duke of Somerset, who was the recipient of Fastolf's advice as to how France and Normandy should be governed:

> "... which instruccions and they might have be performed, had bene the safegard of the seyd lond."[2]

The impression received is that Fastolf had little faith in the judgement of Somerset. Instead of expressing concern for his personal interests, he emphasised the need for a strong and wise

1. Stevenson, op.cit., vol.II, part 2, p.591. McFarlane, 'Profits of War', op.cit., pp.106-7. considered that Fastolf supported York in his last years. See also C.F. Allmand, Lancastrian Normandy, 1415-50, (Oxford, 1983).

2. Stevenson, p.592.

council to advise him, the appointment of a discreet chancellor and a valiant lieutenant in Gascony and Guienne, the need to discourage his captains from being rapacious and unjust and to provision strong towns and defend ports. The tone of the work indicated, however, that the writer was not sanguine about the outcome of Beaufort's governorship. The next set of instructions which, a morose preface stated, were not observed, were intended to prevent the loss of Caen and thus of Normandy by Beaufort in 1450.[1]

More recommendations, surviving in the College of Arms,[2] were probably written by Fastolf about a year before his attempt to bring about the relief of Caen in 1449.[3] This represented a larger and more ambitious scheme for safe-guarding the royal domains in France, the English coast and trading interests. It was written in Latin and at one point the providence of Antenor was contrasted with the fortitude of Hector. This was a formal document addressed to the king, not a council working paper, and that probably explains the choice of language and more careful style. Like the later Boke of Noblesse., it may be that, although it emanated from Fastolf, it was actually written down by Worcester, Scrope or one of the other men of letters in his household. The proposed plan was a large one, providing precise deployments for forty thousand soldiers, partly

1. Stevenson, op.cit., vol.II, part 2, pp.595-7.

2. College of Arms MS Arundel 48, ff. 329r-332v. Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Arms, ed. W.H. Black (1829, privately printed), pp. 74-90. He described it as: "The Historical Tracts and Collectanea of William Botoner (alias Wyrcestre) with Sir John Fastolf's original State Papers."

3. Stevenson, op.cit., pp. 723-730. Fastolf is referred to in the third person on p.727.

cavalry and partly foot. Yet Fastolf's vision was not limited by the practical demands of the military crisis which existed when he wrote. He refuted the objections that might be raised by those who felt the French lands were not worth defending, by the argument that Calais would be threatened were the French king to gain supremacy on land and sea and also:

> "eo casu non est sine periculo quod multi Anglici, nobiles et alii, (qui durante guerra in Francia laute vivere soliti sunt, et illam vitam in Anglia continuare non possent,) forsan niterentur nostram turbare rempublicam; et tunc forte multi familiares hostes, nunc latitantes et dissimulantes, possent insurgere, ut Wallici, Scoti, et alii, tam intranei quam extranei."[1]

Here the statesman rather than the soldier was speaking; in the next year the lawless sequence of events culminating in the revolt of Jack Cade was to vindicate his pessimism. The preceding item in MS Arundel 48 was probably also by Fastolf. In English, it was apparently composed rather later than the following piece as the loss

1. Stevenson, op.cit., p.726. "That calamity is not without danger because many English, nobles and others (who during the war in France have been accustomed to live sumptuously, and who cannot continue that life in England), will perhaps strive to disturb our common interest. And then perhaps many enemy households, now resting quietly and dissimulating, will be able to rise up as may the Welsh, Scots and others, those within as well as those outside."

of Normandy as well as Maine seemed already to have taken place.[1] The main recommendations, which were presumably addressed to the king's council, had an air of urgency, even desperation. A steward and constable should be appointed for the defence of the realm; Calais should be protected; the movements of French expatriates, some possibly traitors, should be restricted; those who were promised compensation for the loss of lands in Maine should be satisfied. The next two items in Arundel 48 comprised anonymous tracts on the improvement of the coinage of the realm and objections to certain means used to raise money to pay the king's debts.[2] Black thought they too were composed by Fastolf.[3] If he was correct, they provide further evidence of the breadth of his political and commercial concerns which extended beyond his own immediate business and landed interests.

Something has already been said about the relationship between Sir John Fastolf and his stepson, Stephen Scrope, and the genesis of the latter's work as translator of the Othea and the Dicts. Scrope was treated more like a servant than a close relation and allowed little opportunity to undertake work of his own choosing and this gives a good indication of the fate of the other men of letters dependent on Fastolf. Some idea of who they were may be gained from the plentiful documents that survive concerning Fastolf and his household. William Worcester, who may best be described as his

1. Ff. 324-328, Black, op.cit., p.88. Not printed by Stevenson.
2. Arundel MS 48, ff. 333-39, 339-41. Not printed by Stevenson.
3. Black, op.cit., p.88.

secretary, appeared continuously, performing a multiplicity of tasks connected with Fastolf's legal and business affairs, his estates, his family and literary matters. These ranged from research into the historic property rights of his adversaries to the translation of Cicero's De Senectute.[1] Perhaps Worcester's fate was congenial to him for he lacked the high expectations of Scrope and, after his master's death and years of litigation, settled with a modest inheritance from Fastolf to compile his antiquarian Itineraries in the late 1470s. He never failed to speak of his master with respect if not with affection. Indeed his own collections of papers show his interests to have been learned as they consisted of compendia of extracts from ancient and medieval authors.[2] He was assembling just the kind of precepts and anecdotes that would adorn the last of the pieces of wisdom offered by Fastolf to his masters. Worcester also had access to rather more books than it would have been usual to find in the possession of a knight, and his opportunities must have been further extended during the fifteen years that Fastolf spent in Southwark.[3]

The names of four of the other men who were associated with Fastolf and who may have had some pretensions to literary ability are derived from two historical works produced for the knight. One of

1. Much of the information on William Worcester has been derived from K.B. McFarlane, 'William Worcester: A Preliminary Survey', Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. J. Conway David (London, 1957), pp.196-221.

2. British Library, Cotton MS Julius F VII, Royal MS 13 C I and Sloane MS 4.

3. From his return from France in 1439 to 1454 when he moved to Caister Castle, Norfolk.

these, the Acta domini Johannis Fastolf, does not survive although its title and incipit were recorded by Tanner.[1] It seems to have been undertaken at about the time of Fastolf's death as in the following year, 1460, the Paston Letters recorded that Fastolf's servant, John Bussard:

> "wrot a cronekyl of Jerewsalem and the jornes that my mayster dede whyl he was in Fraunce."[2]

Bussard must have been a scribe at least or he may have made some more original contributions to the works mentioned. In either case nothing more is known of any literary activity associated with him.

The preface of College of Arms MS M 9 yields up the names of no less than three more contributors to the works collected by Fastolf.[3] The Liber de actibus armorum regni Francie, ducatus Normannie, ducatus Alenconie, ducatus Andegavie et Cenomanie eum aliis pluribus comitatibus was compiled in French in 1459 by Peter Basset, an English squire who fought under Henry V and John, duke of Bedford, and other princes and lieutenants of Hernry VI for thirty five years.[4] The narrative extends from 1415 to 1429 where it abruptly breaks off, probably because Fastolf had died in the mean-time.

1. T. Tanner, Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica: sive de Scriptoribus (London, 1748), p.115. It is not known whether it was ever completed.

2. Paston Letters, ed. Davis, op.cit., part II, p.201, no. 602. John Davy to John Paston.

3. I have not seen this manuscript; references from McFarlane, op.cit., pp. 207-8.

4. B.J.H. Rowe, 'A Contemporary Account of the Hundred Years War from 1415 to 1429', English Historical Review, vol.xli, 1926, pp. 504-513.

The preface also stated, in parenthesis:

> "... et Christforum Hanson de Patria almayn quondam cum Thomas Beaufort duce Excestrie ac Luket Nantron natus de Parys unus de clericis dicti Iohannis Fastolf et per diligenciam Willelmi Wircestre secretarii predicti Iohannis Fastolf ..."

Christopher Hanson, after his service in the wars,[1] seems to have entered Fastolf's household in a fairly servile capacity. He appeared regularly in the Paston Letters as a perveyor of messages and money, well trusted but of no great account. Since there are no other literary activities with which he might be associated, it seems most likely that it was his reminiscences that he contributed to the Liber de actibus. Luket Nantron similarly found his way from the Continent to served Fastolf. He was almost certainly the 'Luket' referred to in the Paston Letters and, unlike Hanson, his function as a scribe was clear:

> "... suche a copie of a foundacion as your maistership commaunded me to gete you a copie of; of the which I sende unto you at this tyme by my broder William Worcestre iii copies writon by Luket."[2]

1. Rowe, op.cit., gives a useful account of the military careers of Hanson and Basset.

2. Paston Letters, op.cit., part II, p.174, no. 574. Henry Windsor to John Paston.

His clerical status might have fitted him for more creative work than copying charters but this does not seem to have been the case. Compared to Worcester or even Hanson, his personality and tastes do not emerge at all from the plentiful records that survive.

The originator of the history was very probably Peter Basset for the whole tone of the Liber de actibus is businesslike and soldierly rather than learned. Unlike the others there is no reason to believe him to have been a dependant of Fastolf.[1] If he had emulated his more famous comrade in arms, he had probably retired from France with a comfortable estate. The Liber may have been compiled partly to gratify his own wishes and partly to please his dying ex-commander. William Worcester probably made the practical arrangements for the work and looked over the finished product, Nantron was most likely to have been the scribe and Hanson and possibly also Fastolf himself provided additional memorabilia. Even if this model is not entirely accurate, it should provide an approximate idea as to how the complex process of literary production progressed in Fastolf's household.

McFarlane suggested that Fastolf's circle contained yet another author. This was Friar Brackley, described rather unkindly by the anonymous author of a notice in the Ancestor as "...a constant correspondent and hanger-on of the house of Paston".[2] The Friar clearly possessed the capacity to make literary contributions to Fastolf's works; his letters in the Paston correspondence were

1. McFarlane, op.cit., knew of no reference to him in Fastolf's English papers.

2. 'Friar Brackley's Book of Arms', The Ancestor, no. X, 1904, pp. 87-97.

frequently written partly or wholly in Latin and adorned with pious texts.[1] He was also as eager to ingratiate himself with the old knight as with the Pastons.

Apart from the works discussed above and below which were ordered by Fastolf or composed by members of his circle to please him or honour his memory, he was also a collector of books. An inventory survives dated about 1450 which listed twenty books deposited in the "Stew hous" at Caister.[2] It is worth reproducing as it indicates the breadth of Fastolf's literary taste and the sources on which he and his associates could draw in their various literary enterprises:

> "In the Stewe hous; of Frenche books, the Bible, the Cronycles of France, the Cronicles of Titus Levius, a booke of Jullius Cesar, lez Propretez dez Choses, Petrus de Crescentiis, Liber Almagesti, Liber Geomancie cum iiii aliis Astronomie, liber de Roy Artour, Romaunce la Rose, Cronicles d'Angleterre, Veges de larte

1. Davis has queried whether the book of arms and attached French grammar were written by Brackley. He believes they were made by William Paston whilst he was at Cambridge. See Paston Letters, op.cit., vol 1, p.150 and N. Davis & G.S. Ivy, 'MS Walter Rye 38 and its French Grammar'; Medium Aevum, xxxi, 1962, pp.110-24.

2. Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Appendix, Part I (London, 1881), p.268a. From miscellaneous papers in Magdalen College, Oxford.

Chevalerie, Instituts of Justien Emperer, Brute in ryme, liber Etiques, liber de Sentence Joseph. Problemate Aristotilis, Vice & Vertues, liber de Cronykes de Grant Bretagne in ryme, Meditacions Saynt Bernard."

There are good reasons for believing that Fastolf possessed considerably more books than were recorded in the inventory. Scrope and Worcester were almost certainly provided with French manuscripts from which to translate the Dicts, the Othea and the de Senectute and their patron must surely have owned their finished work.[1] A very fine example of a French Othea bears his motto on many pages and, on the last folio, it is entwined with the motto of the Order of the Garter of which Fastolf was so proud a member.[2] Othea was preceded in this manuscript by an anonymous treatise, Des Quatre Vertus Cardinaulx. The theme of the four Cardinal Virtues and their practical application in warfare occurred both in Scrope's preface to the Othea and William Worcester the younger's preface to the Lambeth 506 collection, 'the codicil!' Another Bodleian manuscript, a collection of medical tracts made by Aldobrandinis de Senis, bears Fastolf's name, arms and motto.[3] Finally, an inventory of his goods

1. MS I.2.10. Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Dicts and Sayinges of Philosophers, according to Buhler, op.cit., Introduction, pp.xxx-ii, a mid fifteenth century copy of the original. References to "Johanne ffastolff" and his sayings on ff.44v, 72v and other marginalia in Worcester's hand. It is more likely to have been his personal copy than to have belonged to Fastolf.

2. Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 570, f.93 "Me fault faire 1450" and "Honny Soit Qui mal y Pense". See above, chap. 3.

3. Oxford, Bodleian MS 179.

dated June 6 1462 recorded:

> "... bokes Frenshe, Latyn, and Englysshe remaynyng in the chambre of the said Fastolff..."[1]

The unique manuscript of the Boke of Noblesse in the British Library was written on paper in a professional hand of the third quarter of the fifteenth century.[2] Various hands of both the fifteenth century and later made additions in the margins but the most extensive and significant in content are those that are unmistakably the autograph of William Worcester. There are forty six folios and no illustrations although some rather attractive little figures and faces appear amongst some early doodling and the names of various owners on folios 42v to 43r. The manuscript does not appear in the old royal catalogues and clearly passed through several hands before it was acquired by Lord Lumley. The date of the whole book is unlikely to have been much earlier than June 15 1475 when it was concluded.[3] Although much in the work directly reflected the ideas and attitudes of Fastolf and was reliant on quotations from authorities collected by Worcester many years previously, there is good reason to believe that, in its present form, it was deliberately produced to coincide with Edwards IV's invasion of France. The

1. Paston Letters, ed. Davis, op.cit., part I, p.109. It cannot be estimated how many of these books featured on the more specific 'Stew-hous' list of 1450. Since Fastolf was not then in permanent residence at Caister, it is very probable that he kept a considerable number of books with him in London.

2. Warner and Gilson catalogue, op.cit., vol.II, pp.294-5.

3. Nichols, op.cit., p.85.

Introduction was dedicated to:

> "...the moste hyghe and myghety prince Kynge Edward the iiiithe for the avauncyng and preferryng the comyn publique of the Royaumes of England and of Fraunce."[1]

The rest of the introduction spoke poignantly of the distress of the king's subjects at the loss of the French territories and their hopes that they might be reconquered. Yet in no way were these aspirations addressed to the particular circumstances of 1475. Henry VI was certainly referred to as "...youre antecessoure ... then named king".[2] Yet despite this deliberate piece of updating the general tone of the introduction, dwelling on the grievances of the dispossessed, seems more appropriate to the shock felt by the English at their losses in the early 1450s than the calmer days of 1475. One passage described 1450 as "...the yere of oure Lorde",[3] further evidence that most of the book was compiled during Fastolf's lifetime.

The contents of the Boke give indications of having been designed by a consortium and that William Worcester rather than Peter Basset or Stephen Scrope was the co-ordinator of the enterprise. Indeed the omission of Basset's name from any of the campaign anecdotes implies that he at least had no hand in it. There is also

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.1.
2. Ibid., p.3.
3. Ibid.

scope for scepticism about Buhler's and Warner's claims for the authorship of Stephen Scrope. He had translated the Epistle of Othea over ten years before the inception of the Boke of Noblesse and it would surely have been utilised as a source for such appropriate subjects as the morality of warfare and good knighthood. Similarly, his translation of the Dicts, produced in 1450, would almost certainly have been used by him as an authority.

Stephen Scrope, Christopher Hanson, Friar Brackley, Luket Nantron and John Bussard or some of these members of Fastolf's household and following may have made greater or lesser contributions to the work and Bussard and Nantron may have been amongst the scribes who produced the two volumes. All we can be certain of, however, is that Sir John Fastolf himself was a major contributor; planning the work, ensuring that items about which he felt strongly, such as the use of wise and aged counsellors, were included and providing personal reminiscences which were added dutifully by Worcester to the draft of the 1475 version of the Boke. There are two substantial reasons for assuming that Worcester was the author of the main part of the work as well as the marginalia. First, the style, and particularly the use of quotations from authorities that we know from his commonplace books he used widely, increase the likelihood that he was the author. Second, his son, also called William Worcester, said in the prologue to Lambeth 506:

> "...my pore fader, William Worcestre ... toke upone hym to write in this mater, and compiled this boke ... after the seyng of the masters of philosophie, as Renatus Vegesius, in his Boke of

> Batayles, also Julius Frontinus, in his Boke of Knyghtly Laboures, callid in Greke Stratagematon, a new auctoure callid the Tree of Batayles."[1]

Again it was Warner who was the first to point out that William Worcester the Younger could not have been referring to Lambeth 506 as it contained none of the authorities referred to above.[2] It would be a very apt description of the Boke, however, which made long references to two of the books named.[3] Probably Lambeth 506 was intended as a codicil of "pièces justicatives" to the main text of the Boke. Many of the documents must, of course, have originally been intended for other purposes, for example to substantiate claims for compensation or to give support to York's arraignment of Somerset for military incompetence. In any case, the attribution of the authorship of the surviving version of the Boke and its codicil to William Worcester would seem to be justified and, for the remainder of this study, the name 'Worcester' will be taken as synonymous with that of the author of the Boke and the codicil.

The Boke of Noblesse gives little evidence of much coherence of theme or purpose. The first four chapters alternate considerations of the morality of warfare with historical justifications for the English actions in France.[4]

1. Stevenson, op.cit., vol.II, part 2, p.522.

2. Warner, op.cit., Introduction, pp.xliii-vi.

3. Frontinus was not referred to but Christine de Pisan quoted him so it would have been easy to make such a mistake.

4. These are based directly on Christine de Pisan's five causes of the outbreak of war, three of right, two of force. Taken from the Livre des fais darmes et de chevalerie, pub. Anthoine Verard (Paris, 1488), chap.II, f.2v.

The work then took on a more narrative form as the history of the English claim was briefly traced from the time of king Arthur down to the regency of Bedford and the coronation of Henry VI in Paris. This was the occasion for the delivery of the first of a number of vigorous exhortations addressed to Edward IV which is worth quoting in part since, insofar as the Boke has a theme, it embodies it and also furnishes a good example of Worcester's original prose. This was lively if a little clumsy when it was untrammelled by the weight of Fastolf's reminiscences or the learned allusions that beset most of the work:

> "O ... ye most noble and cristen prince ... Now, therfore, in repairing this undew intrusion uppon yow, mantelle, fortifie, and make yow strong ayenst the power of youre said adversaries of Fraunce. For now it is tyme to clothe you in armoure of defense ayenst youre ennemies, withe the cotes of armes of youre auncien feernesse, haveng in remembraunce the victorious conquestis of youre noble predecessours, the whiche clothing many histories, cronicles, and writinges witnessithe moo than myn simple entendement can not suffice to reherse in this brief epistle."[1]

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.20.

The Boke lost any semblance of structure in the middle chapters. Extracts from Greek and Roman history intermingled with references to contemporary events and authorities such as Boethius, Vegetius, Ralph de Diceto's Imago Historiarum, Alain Chartier and Christine de Pisan. The general purpose remained to encourage Edward IV in his enterprise against France by citing ancient and modern examples of justice and fortitude and to urge him to make war in accord with the best precepts of morality and military science. It would constitute a study in itself to establish the exact extent to which Worcester or any other contributors relied on the many sources quoted but, in some cases, it can be shown that they were simply given verbatim:

> "Dame Cristen saiethe in the first booke of the Tree of Batailes that there is none erthely thing more forto be allowed than a countre or region whiche be furnisshed and stored withe good men of armes well lerned and exercited; for golde, silver, ne precious stones surmountethe not ne conquerithe not ennemies, nother in time of pease wardithe the peple to be in rest..."[1]

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.27. Here Worcester confused Christine's Livre des fais d'armes et chevalerie with Honoret Bouvet's Arbre des Batailles. Later, on pp.54-5, He committed the same error as Scrope in stating that Christine arranged for various scholars to compile the work rather than allowing that she wrote it herself.

> "Et nulle riens dist il nest plus ferme ne plus bien eure ne qui plus face a louer que est contree ou foison a de bons hommes darmes bien duitz et bien aprins en tout ce qui y appartient. Car or ne argent ne pierres precieuses ne surmontent pas les ennemis ne en paix ne font vivre les habitans."[1]

Not only was the compiler inaccurate in respect of the title of this work, from time to time he seems to have used it whilst giving the impression that he had gone back to the original authority quoted. For example, having allowed Christine the credit for a passage on the virtues required of a military leader, he then claimed the authority of Vegetius for his next point when it seems very likely that he had simply copied it from the same page of the Fais which had actually taken the idea from the Roman writer.[2] Similarly he expressed confusion with sources and facts when making the point that it was necessary to be regular in the exercise of arms. In the margin the anecdote which illustrated the advice was attributed to Alain Chartier, although the ultimate source of Titus Livius was given further down. The following extracts should demonstrate that he did not adhere particularly closely either to Christine or to the episode as it occurred in Chartier's Quadrilogue Invectif but the point he was making was the same as hers, whilst Chartier was using the story to contrast the rashness of Varro with the wise delays of Fabius Maximus:

1. Fais, op.cit., f.15r.
2. Nichols, pp.54-5, Fais, f.27r.

"...what was the losses of the Romayns, whiche in defaute and by negligence lost by a litille tyme left the exercise of armes was fulle gret ayenst the doughty men of Cartage, whan alle the puissance of the Romains were assembled in bataile, where that were so many noble men and coragious peple, the whiche were innumerable, assembled and joyned in bataile, that men say was betwene Camos and Hanibal prince of Cartage, the whiche discomfit before duke Camos in Puylle be suche power that the ringis of golde take frome the fingers of ded bodies of the said Romains, whiche were men of price and renomme, and Titus Livius seiethe in his booke of Romayne batailes were extendid and mesurid to the quantite of mesure of xii quarters or more, whiche Hanibal brought withe hym to his countre of Cartage in signe of victorie."[1]

"Et dist il (Vegetius) les rommains mesmement qui ia plusieurs terres avoient conquises delaisserent ung temps tellement lexercite darmes que par la desascoutumance ilz furent par Hanibal prince dauffrique desconfitz. En la seconde bataille ilz perdirent quasi toute leur seigneurie devant caves en puille qui fut si horrible que pres tous

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.26.

ceulx de romme y furent mors et leurs chevaulx capitaines prins et destruis et de notable chevalerie en si grant cantite que apres la desconfiture hanibal qui fit chercer le champ en eut trois muys tous plains daneaux dor de leurs dois comme dit listoire le quelz il fit porte en son pays en ioye et en signe de victoire."[1]

"En pareil cas le monstra bien le saige Rommain Fabius Maximus au temps de sa dictature, apres les innumerable pertes que firent les Rommains par la folle entreprinse de Varro le consul a la bataille de Cannes, a l'encontre de Hannibal lors esleve en orgueil par la haultesce de ses victoires, en laquelle bataille furent tant de nobles hommes perduz que pour magnifier sa victoire Hannibal envoya a Cartage troys muys

1. Fais, op.cit., ff.14v-15r. "And he says (Vegetius) that even the Romans who had conquered many lands abandoned for a time the exercise of arms so that by that lack of use they were defeated by Hannibal, prince of Africa. In the second battle they lost nearly all theirs lords before Caves in Puille. It was so terrible that nearly all the Romans died, their horse captains and chivalry were taken and destroyed in such great numbers that after the defeat Hannibal caused the field to be searched which yielded three baskets full of golden rings from their fingers as the history recounts. These he had transported to his country in joy and in sign of victory."

> des anneaulx d'or qui orent este prins en leurs dois."[1]

Worcester also made the unfortunate mistake of confusing the place name 'Cannae' with the various combatants and fabricated a wholly bogus Roman called 'duke Camos'.

Despite infelicities such as those cited above, on the whole Worcester quoted widely and reasonably accurately. Appendix 3 gives the list of sources that he stated that he had used, subdivided into biblical, classical, patristic, medieval and near contemporary authors. An indication also given where the books used may have been the same as those which appeared in the inventory of Sir John Fastolf or were used by Worcester in his own collections of quotations. Parts of the Boke which do not specifically refer to an authority may, in fact, be compilation rather than original material. In the middle of a long disquisition on fourteenth and fifteenth century history, for example the following occurred:

> "So wolde Jhesus that in the brief seson of the sodeyne and wrecchid intrusion late[2] had by the

1. Alain Chartier, Le Quadrilogue Invectif, ed. E. Droz (Paris, 1923), pp.31-32. "A similar case shows well the wisdom of Fabius Maximus in the time of his dictatorship. This was after the innumerable disasters which overcame the Romans by the foolish enterprise of the consul Varro at the battle of Cannes, his encounter with Hannibal through pride in the distinction of his victories. In that battle so many noble men were lost that to magnify his victory Hannibal sent to Carthage three baskets of golden rings which had been taken from their fingers."

2. The use of these words tends to place this extract in the 1450s rather than the 1470s.

> unmanly disseising and putting oute of Fraunce, Normandie, Angew, and Mayne, withe the duchies of Gasquine and Guyen, which is[1] done bethin the space of i yere and xiii wekis ... every castelle, forteresse, and towne defensable of the said duchiees (were delyvered upp by force or composicion to the adverse partye).[2] And if they had be alway furnished and stuffed withe suche suffisaunt nombre of men of armes, with ordenaunce, vitaile, and wages duely kept and be paied, that they myght couraged and enforced hem to have bene kept stille the possession..."[3]

This must surely have been based on the writings of Fastolf in the late 1440s and early 1450s. The bitter tone and practical measures advocated strongly recall the contents of his memoranda referred to above which are preserved in Lambeth 506 and Arundel 48. In contrast another passage which was not specifically attributed to an authority which occurred in the middle of a dazzling series of references to authors such as Ptolemy, Josephus, Orosius, Gildas and Boethius was clearly based on the "ubi sunt" theme which occurred in a number of medieval moral treatises:

> "And where is Nynnyve, the gret cite of thre daies?

1. The use of these words tends to place this extract in the 1450s rather than the 1470s.
2. The words within brackets are in Worcester's autograph.
3. Nichols, op.cit., p.48.

> and Babilon, the gret toure, inhabited now withe wilde bestis? the cities of Troy (and) Thebes, ii grete magnified citeis? also Athenes, that was the welle of connyng and of wisdam?..."[1]

Some semblance of structure was reintroduced into the Boke when, probably in deference to the ancient Fastolf, several chapters stressed the importance of employing wise, selfless old men as leaders and counsellors.[2] Cicero's De Senectute was quoted extensively, calling to mind the attribution of a translation from the French of Laurence Premierfait to William Worcester. The preface of William Caxton's edition of 1481 presented to Edward IV simply stated that it had been translated at the orders of Sir John Fastolf. The companion pieces, the De Amicitia and the Declaration of Noblesse, were translated by John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, according to Caxton. Despite the fact that William Worcester recorded in his Itineraries for 1472 that he had presented his translation of the De Senectute to the bishop of Winchester but had not been rewarded,[3] several scholars have chosen to claim the credit

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.51. No attempt will be made to assess how far he may have used the authors' own works as opposed to encyclopaedias. From the brief survey of his sources made above it seems likely that he used a considerable number of original works.

2. Ibid., pp. 58-66.

3. William Worcester, Itineraries, ed. J.H. Harvey (Oxford, 1969), pp.252-3. "1472. Die, 10 Augusti presentavi W. Episcopo Wyntoniensi apud Esher librum Tullii de Senectute per me translatum in anglicis s(ed) nullum regardum recepi de Episcopo." Earlier authorities such as McFarlane, op.cit., p.215, gave the date as 1473. Harvey's edition is followed here. He did not mention the disparity between his dating and that of earlier historians.

for Tiptoft or Scrope.[1] It is not essential for the purposes of the present chapter to prove that Worcester was the translator of Caxton's edition of Tully of Old Age. The passages from the Boke and Old Age that I have compared do not show a striking similarity to each other, nor do the further passages quoted by Buhler. This proves little, however, as it is likely that work on the Boke started in about 1453 whereas, since Caxton implied that Fastolf was eighty when he ordered the translation of De Senectute, it must be assumed that it was undertaken towards the end of that decade. A feeling that the compiler of the Boke should receive his due leads to the invocation of the principle that, everything else being equal, credence should be given to what the fifteenth century writers actually said. Caxton said that the translation was carried out on the orders of Fastolf; Worcester stated in 1472 that he had made a translation of the De Senectute. McFarlane and Davis were prepared to take these statements at their face value.[2]

After more excursions into ancient history the final part of the Boke assumed more coherence and addressed itself to contemporary problems in a manner that was not characteristic of the earlier parts. "How a prince ... make alwaie just paiment to her soudeours, for eschewing of gret inconvenientis might falle"[3] might have been influenced by Christine's Fais which included similar sentiments but

1. Blades, Life and Typography, op.cit., vol.2, p.92, favoured Tiptoft. Painter, op.cit., pp.111-2, and Warner, op.cit., pp.xlvi-ii, and Buhler, Dicts, op.cit., Introduction, pp.xli-vi, favoured Scrope.

2. McFarlane, op.cit., p.215, "... it will take more than analogy to prove him a liar." R.J. Mitchell, John Tiptoft, 1427-70 (London, 1938), p.174, also believed Worcester to be the translator of the De Senectute.

3. Nichols, op.cit., pp.71-4.

was likely to have been based more directly on Fastolf's memoranda of which they are reminiscent. The bitterness and disgust at the mismanagement which led to the loss of the French lands and the praise of the wise government of Bedford were typical of his thought. The next few chapters possess much more of the character of conventional books of advice for nobles and princes concerning themselves with such matters as respect for the Church, the regular exercise of arms, the need to choose honest and virtuous officers of the law and to avoid excessive luxury. These noble sentiments were supported by quotations from the Bible, St Jerome and Fastolf.[1] The tone changed yet again, however, when the subject of the payment of debts was raised. The interests and aspirations of the veterans of the Hundred Years War were given due weight and, however hopelessly, specific requests were made:

> "...righte noble king, ... let youre riche tresours be spradde and put abrode, bothe juellis, vesselle of gold and silver, among youre true subgettis, and inespecialle to the helpe and avauncement of youre conquest, and to the relief of youre indigent and nedie peple. And inespecialle to tho that have lost theire londis, livelode, and goode in the werres..."[2]

There was then a brief and rather strangely chosen return to the

1. Nichols, op.cit., pp.74-80.
2. Ibid., pp.80-1.

"mirror for princes" theme with the advice St Louis gave to his son to rule with justice and peace. The chapter ended with another exhortation to the English people: they were urged to give all possible assistance to their country in its hour of need; "...finaunce, good, or tresoure"[1] were the kind of support required. Further to emphasise the point, the final chapter of the Boke embarked on a lengthy story taken from Titus Livius of how the Romans gave generously of their resources to defend Sicily during the Punic Wars even though they had already paid heavy taxes to the state. The moral was clearly drawn in the concluding sentence which would surely have held a greater practical appeal for Edward IV than all the rest of the Boke:

> "And wolde the mightifulle God that every hard covetouse hert were of suche largesse and distributif of here meveable good and tresoure to the comon wele, as for defending us frome oure adversaries, and keping the see aswelle as the londe, that we may alway be lordis and maistris thereof, as noble governours were before this tyme.
> Here endyth thys Epistle, undre correccion, the xv. day of June, the yeere of Crist $M^{l}iiii^{c}lxxv$, and of the noble Reyne of kyng Edward the iiiithe the xv^{ne}."[2]

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.82.
2. Ibid., p.85.

The phrase "undre correccion" in the concluding sentence confirms the theory that it was by no means the first version of the Boke to be produced. There was also possibly a later copy as William Worcester the younger referred to "the boke" in his preface to Lambeth 506 which, as has been suggested above, was only a 'codicil' to the Boke of Noblesse. Assuming that a presentation had already been made to Edward IV of the Boke and its codicil, another pair of volumes incorporating the younger Worcester's preface, replacing the original beginning of the Boke, would have had to be produced for Richard III. The probable chronology of the Boke and its 'codicil' is outlined below for greater clarity:

c.1421-c.1452: Collection by Fastolf, Worcester and possibly other members of their circle of letters, memoranda, etc., connected with the French wars. Worcester also started to compile wise sayings and anecdotes from classical and Christian authors.

c.1452-c.1460: Amongst other literary enterprises Fastolf instructed Worcester and possibly others to compile an epistle to Henry VI to encourage him to undertake the reconquest of his French lands. A codicil of "pièces justicatives" was to be attached and drafts of both volumes were produced.

c.1460-1472: Project abandoned due to death of Fastolf, political uncertainty and absorption of Worcester in business connected with Fastolf's will and estate.

c.1472-1475: Announcement of Edward IV's intention to invade France gave Worcester an incentive to fulfil an act of piety to his master's memory and hastily update the Boke and get scribes to copy it with its 'codicil'. He presented a preliminary document to Edward on May 29 1475. Working copies of the drafts with marginalia by Worcester survive.

c.1483-1485: After the death of Worcester his son decided to re-dedicate the Boke and its 'codicil' to Richard III. He attached a new preface for the whole work to the draft his father had made of the 'codicil'.

In or after 1485: The dedication by Worcester the younger in the draft of the 'codicil' was altered from 'Richard' to 'Edward'. The name 'Edward' in the dedication of the working copy of the Boke was crudely altered to 'Henry'.

Since they do not seem to have survived, it is impossible to know whether presentation copies of the Boke and the 'codicil' were produced in 1475 and during the reign of Richard III. Given the statement of Worcester the younger in Lambeth 506 it seems probable that such volumes were in fact made and presented in the year of the invasion of France. Considering the uncertainty of affairs throughout the reign of Richard and the rather untimely advice the book contained for his precarious situation, it is to be doubted whether the presentation was ever repeated. The possibility remains that the two surviving manuscripts were those destined to be presented to the Yorkist monarchs rather than working copies. There are several objections to this hypothesis, the first one being that neither is sufficiently attractive to have been a formal gift.[1] The marginalia of Worcester added, presumably in both cases soon after the volumes were written, are untidy. Apart from some fairly elaborate rubricated capitals on folios 1 and 46 to 52 in Lambeth 506, neither volume bears any of the ornaments normally given to

1. Professor Scattergood has, however, pointed out that not all the books presented to royalty were necessarily splendid. He quotes Skelton's Chronicque de Rains which was given to Henry VIII as an example.

royal presentation books. There is no reason to believe that either volume was in royal possession in the fifteenth century; the Boke belonged to various owners including Lord Lumley before it went to the Royal Library[1] and Lambeth 506 formerly belonged to the Carew family.[2] Finally the existence of William the younger's dedication to Richard III in the 'codicil' indicates that it could not have been presented before 1483 and postulates the existence of at least one more copy.

The main interest for the history of books of advice to princes must be, however, the contents rather than the provenance of the Boke of Noblesse and its 'codicil'. Any justification for its position in this chapter rather than the previous one devoted to translations and adaptations must depend on demonstrating that it possessed a reasonable measure of originality. A claim may be made that this is the case largely on the grounds that so many different influences can be discerned in the book that it would be impossible to dismiss it as a mere piece of plagiarism. William Worcester never committed himself to placing the work in a recognisable genre: a conventional "mirror for a prince", a history of the Roman wars and of Western Europe since the Normans, a polemic on contemporary politics or a compilation of Fastolf's memoirs of the French wars. Indeed we do not know how much discretion his master allowed him in the early stages of composition. By the 1470s it was too late; respect for his master's wishes, the pressure of producing a work by the summer

1. Warner and Gilson, op.cit., vol. II, p.295.

2. M.R. James, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace, The Medieval Manuscripts (Cambridge, 1932), p.710.

of 1475 and his own lack of experience in composing satisfactory and original literature all militated against Worcester. What we have is an idiosyncratic and disorderly amalgam of the elements mentioned above with interpolations in which the author addressed himself to the king or the English people to reinforce the points he had attempted to make. There is sufficient originality, however, in what he wrote and reported of Fastolf, whom he significantly described as "myne autor",[1] as well as in the way in which he assembled his rich array of authorities, for him to merit with his patron the credit for producing an original book addressed to the problem of the recovery of the French lands.

The quality of Fastolf's advice as to the wise conduct of the wars in France and, subsequently, how the French lands might be reconquered was excellent. The wisdom of the premise on which his policy was based might be questioned, particularly after the loss of Maine, Normandy and Guienne. Yet his recommendations for the vigorous prosecution of the war, the warnings about the credibility of the French peace moves, his pleas for proper finance for the wars and his condemnations of the self interest, rivalry and speculation that weakened the war effort on both sides of the Channel were unimpeachable. Taken in conjunction with the even more statesmanlike documents in College of Arms MS 48, it is not claiming too much for Fastolf to compare him favourably with Sir John Fortescue in the realistic assessment he made of the political necessities of the situation in England and France in the middle of the fifteenth century. His grasp of reality might well have weakened with age and disillusion in the late 1450s, although even then a limited but

1. Nichols, op.cit., p.64.

successful campaign in France might have restored the bankrupt credit of Henry VI's government.

The final problems to be considered concerning the Boke of Noblesse and its 'codicil' are those of dissemination and the influence it might have exerted. The dedications expressed no wish for the work to be known by anyone other than the royal recipients, yet much of the material in both volumes, especially the Boke, was clearly intended, when it was produced, for a wider audience. Many of the long anecdotes and the wise sayings that occurred in the Boke would have been very familiar in educated circles in the later middle ages, and the newer material such as the translations of Chartier and Christine were being made known to contemporaries by other means.[1] The element in the Boke which possessed the most vigour, persuasiveness and originality, the parts based on Fastolf's anecdotes and war memoranda which had only ever been communicated to members of the council in France and his own immediate circle, was that which was doomed to remain unknown. If either Edward or Richard ever received the work, it is unlikely that they had the time or inclination to pay much heed to it.

Although it is unlikely that either Yorkist monarch was influenced in his development of foreign policy by the Boke of Noblesse, it is still pertinent to question the wisdom of the advice it contained. Conflicting views of the need for war and the value of the ensuing peace have been expressed since the time of Edward IV. The King's chancellor, Thomas Rotheram, was probably the offical who addressed a lucid and persuasive apologia for a French campaign to parliament in 1474. He gave a wide ranging account of the current

1. Byles, Caxton, op.cit., and Blayney, Chartier, op.cit.

situation: the duplicity of Louis XI, the failure of the attempts to make peace and the promised support of European allies. This was followed by a glowing picture of the benefits of a victorious war : improvements in trade and general prosperity, the prestige of regaining ancient lands and the Crown of France and the savings in taxation that might be made once the great naval threat was removed. Part of his argument was strongly reminiscent both of Fastolf's war memoranda and the Boke:

> "And be it well remembred, how that it is nat wele possible, nor hath ben since the Conquest, that justice, peax, and prosperite hath contenued any while in this lande in any Kings dayes but in suche as have made werre outward. Example by Kyng Henry the First, Henry the Secunde, King Richard the First, Henry the Thirde for the tyme he werred oute, Edward the First, and Edward the Third, Henry the fifthe usurpour, and Henry the Sixth which also usurped which last Henry in his daies, notwithstandyng his simplenesse of witte, stode ever in glorie and honour while the werre was contynued by yonde; and, that left, succeisively all fell to decay. Right so it happened in olde daies at the Citee of Rome..."[1]

1. Literae Cantuarienses, The Letter Books of the Monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, 3 vols., ed. J. Brigstocke Sheppard, (Rolls Series, 1889), vol.III, p.282. C. Richmond, '1485 and All That', Richard III: Loyalty, Lordship and Law, ed. P.W. Hammond, (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 186-9.

Here the concept of the intimate link between external victories and inward peace was clearly established by precedents both from England's own past and classical history. This last point was vehemently taken up by Charles the Rash in his expostulations against the peaceful conclusion of the 1475 campaign. Philippe de Commynes's report of the episode concludes with a sinister anticipation of the kind of alienation that Edward's agreement had caused amongst some of his subjects:

> "Ledict duc se courroussa et parla angloys (car it sçavoit le langaige) et allegua plusiers beaulx faictz des roys d'Angleterre qui estoient passéz en France et des peines qu'ilz avoyent prinses pour y acquerir honneur et blasma fort ceste trève, disant qu'il n'avoit point cerché à faire passer les Angloys pour besoing qu'il en eust, mais pour recouvrer ce que leur appartenoit;... Le roy d'angleterre print très mal ces parolles, et ceulx de son conseil; autres, qui n'estoient point contens de ceste paix, louèrent ce que ledict duc avoit dit."[1]

1. Phillippe de Commynes, Memoires, ed. J. Calmette, Les Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Age, 2 vols., (Paris, 1925), vol. 2, pp.53-4. "The duke worked himself up into a fury and spoke in English (because he could speak the language) and cited several fine deeds done by English kings who had crossed to France and all the trouble they had taken to acquire honour there; he bitterly inveighed against this truce, saying that he had not sought to bring the English over because he had need of them but so that they could recover what belonged to them....The king of England and his council were very displeased by these words. Other people who were not satisfied by the peace praised what the duke had said. "Philippe de Commynes, Memoirs, trans, M. Jones, (Penguin, 1972), p.251.

Twentieth century historians have tended to applaud Edward IV for his realism in drawing back from a costly and probably futile war. Perroy generally felt that the king had negotiated a good settlement.[1] Twenty years later Fowler was still commending his wisdom:

> "England had neither needed, wanted nor could afford them (standing armies), and it is a commonplace that Edward IV's great lesson from his bankrupted predecessor was to be paid to keep out of France, a lesson which was not lost on Henry VII".[2]

Soon afterwards Lander and Ross expressed the same opinion:

> "Edward, let down by his temperamental ally, took the wise, if unheroic, course of leaving France in return for a large payment and an annual pension."[3]

> "It came close to involving England in a ruinous foreign war, which profoundly might have changed

1. E. Perroy, The Hundred Years War, (London, 1951), pp.347-8.

2. K. Fowler, 'War and Change in Late Medieval France and England', pp.1-27, The Hundred Years War, ed. K. Fowler, Problems in Focus, (London, 1971), p.20.

3. J.R. Lander, 'The Hundred Years War and Edward IV's 1475 Campaign in France', pp.70-100, Tudor Men and Institutions: Studies in the English Law and Constitution, ed. A.J. Slavin, (Baton Rouge, 1972), p.91.

the character of Edward's later years, and from which only good fortune rescued him."[1]

The last two writers recognised the mixed feelings with which many Englishmen saw the onset of war and stressed the limitations the parliament of 1472-4 set on the conditions for granting supply. Lander was also sceptical about the king's commitment to the war effort although Ross countered this by stressing the large scale and elaboration of the preparations which intimated an expectation of a serious campaign. McFarlane compared the advice in the Boke of Noblesse, (that a war in France would provide a solution to England's difficulties), favourably with Fortescue's pleas for peace in the Governance of England.[2] Paradoxically a weak king such as Henry VI might have profited from Fastolf's recommendations; the strong and successful Edward proved in his 1475 campaign that he could return home without any territorial gains to his credit and still rule peacefully until his natural death seven years later. On the other hand, as Colin Richmond has pointed out,[3] the anticlimax of the campaign misdirected the energies of great magnates, particularly Richard of Gloucester, to internecine strife with the Woodvilles. This culminated in the conflicts of 1483 and the overthrow of the dynasty in 1485. The commentator is thus left with the anomalous

1. Ross, op.cit., p.205.

2. Ibid., p.214: "...it is possible to think that the secretary was more perspicacious than the judge and had a better historical sense." He was assuming, of course, that Worcester rather than Fastolf was the originator of the advice. See below, chapter 5, for an alternative interpretation of Fortescue's position concerning France in the Governance.

3. 1485 and All That, op.cit.

conclusion that advice which was compiled from documents and circumstances relating to the 1430s, 40s and 50s and intended for Henry VI during the last decade of his first reign was finally produced in 1475 when it was almost certainly disregarded. Its application, however, at the time of Picquigny and later, when the repercussions of the treaty were manifested, could have been most felicitous.

The nature of the Boke of Noblesse is hard to define[1] and this is largely a function of the unusual circumstances of its composition which have been suggested above. In common with the De Laudibus Legum Anglie and Governance of England by Sir John Fortescue, however, it was founded on political needs which were unique to England. In place of the laws and institutions of the realm, the Boke owed its inception to the English interests in France and, more particularly, the aspirations of such men as Sir John Fastolf. Despite the fact that the argument was supported by quotations from such un-English authorities as Cicero, Boethius, Christine de Pisan and Alain Chartier, the central preoccupation was an exclusively national one. The main theme of the book, sustained by a series of rhetorical passages addressed to king Edward, undoubtedly owed much to similar passages in Chartier's Quadrilogue Invectif and other such

1. Klieneke's view of it as a manifestation of the chivalric tradition that was still strong in England is illuminating. Op.cit., p.144: "Selbst die konkret politische Forderung ist in diesem Falle aus dem ritterlich-ethischen Empfinden zu erklaren." I adopted a similar approach in my 1971 article, but am now inclined to give more weight to the original, Fastolfian unchivalric material and less to the quotations from Christine de Pisan. M.L. Kekewich, 'Edward IV, William Caxton and Literary Patronage in Yorkist England', Modern Language Review, vol.66, 1971, pp.481-87.

works. Yet this does not detract from the peculiarly English combination of Worcester's antiquarian collection of authorities and the robust self interest and long experience informing those parts which emanated from Fastolf. A precedent for such a piece may even be found earlier in the century. The Crowned King was a much shorter and more orderly work but, like the Boke, it was presented to a powerful and successful monarch, Henry V, on his departure on a French campaign.[1] It also raised the problem of financing the ensuing war, although it was more restrictive on the royal power to levy revenue. In conclusion, it could almost be said that Fastolf had addressed so many pieces of advice directly and indirectly to the governors of England that he had created his own genre. The Boke of Noblesse and its 'codicil', albeit posthumously, can be viewed as the last and longest of these attempts to influence royal policies on the recovery of the French lands.

1. Historical Poems of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, ed. R.H. Hope Robbins, (New York, 1959), pp.227-32 and note pp. 385-6.